

# WAR COMMENTARY

## *For Anarchism*

Vol. 6, No. 20.

28th JULY, 1945.

# FAREWELL TO FREEDOM

The conference of the Big Three continues its activities in absolute secrecy. One of the rare communiques which have been issued from Potsdam announced that last Saturday night "important business was discussed". Apart from that we learn that Mr. Eden has had stomach trouble, that Mr. Churchill has seen Stalin, that Mr. Truman played the piano, had two lunches in the same day and, as a true Democrat, attended both Protestant church and Catholic mass on Sunday morning. Journalists protest against this news black-out but the security service, which seems to be in the hands of the Russians, uses (according to certain information) bloodhounds in order to keep correspondents from Potsdam, and has set up a spy system for the occasion.

It is in this atmosphere of mystery that the "liberators" are deciding the fate of future generations. It is preferable not to crush suddenly every illusion, not to say at once that the war of civilization against barbarism

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These are only a few of the problems under discussion.

Where is the Atlantic Charter with its promises of Freedom for everyone?

Freedom of Speech?—Only inside Potsdam.

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# PACIFIC

Observers are all in agreement that the question of the war in the Far East is being examined at Potsdam. It is certain that operations against Japan have been intensifying during these last few weeks and that the bombing of Japan must form a pleasant musical background to a debate in which Power plays the role of the Primadonna.

Truman and Churchill are showing Stalin that they are strong enough to beat Japan without the intervention of Russia. It seems that the President of the United States has already in his pocket the conditions of surrender which the Allies want to impose on Japan. Persistent rumours are circulating that the Japanese Government is making peace overtures.

The participation of Russia in the Asiatic conflict has been one of the major problems for the three big powers, up to the end of the war in Europe. This possibility is now excluded at the present time but the terms of the problem have changed.

It seems, and one is obliged to say it seems, as no precise information can be obtained on this subject, that at the present time America does not wish to see the Red Army enter the fight against the Japanese. The military situation of the Allies in the Pacific is sufficiently strong to warrant this attitude. The most formidable naval fleet in history can cruise safely in front of Tokio, and fire on chosen objectives. Allied aviation has established itself at Okinawa, on the very door step of Japan, at Iwo Jima and in the Marianas.

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It is in this atmosphere of mystery that the "liberators" are deciding the fate of future generations. It is preferable not to crush suddenly every illusion, not to say at once that the war of civilization against barbarism is ending simply as a commercial undertaking. It is better to let the men and women who have fought and who have suffered for years believe that Truman, Churchill and Stalin are now concerned with higher

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When the Japanese Fleet dominated the Pacific instead of the squadrons of Admiral Nimitz, the entry of the Soviet Union in the war could have been an important perhaps even deciding factor. At that time particularly in 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill were ready to make great concessions to Stalin in order to attract him into the war in the Far East. Manchuria, Korea and Formosa did not seem too big a price for the participation of the Red Army and for putting at the disposal of the Allies the Russian base of Western Siberia, Vladivostok in particular.

To-day the deal does not seem worth while. Stalin may have missed some good business. Anyway, Washington seems to be less and less inclined to give up Manchuria and its practically inexhaustible resources, to the Soviet Union which she does not really need to beat Japan. According to Press reports which seem reliable the American navy would be frankly hostile to such a project and declares that the help of Russia is hardly desirable. Stalin knows all this of course. It is no coincidence that, before leaving for Potsdam, he has had long interviews with Mr. Soong Tse-chen, China's Prime Minister. According to the American magazine *Time* already a year ago

# Dockers and Transport Workers on Strike

We are already commencing on the period of post-war industrial struggle. No longer are the workers content to be put off with arguments regarding wartime necessities, for the war against Japan is so obviously and openly an imperialist quarrel that they recognise clearly that they have no responsibility towards it. They realise that now their main object must be to prevent the structure of industrial oppression which was built up in wartime from becoming a permanent feature of peacetime, and they are beginning to attack it now, at the period of a transition from a wartime to a peacetime shape, when it will be in its weakest form. Strikes are breaking out everywhere for increased wages, for shorter hours and better time schedules and working conditions. The tempo of struggle

increases, and is likely to grow into a great wave of industrial revolt.

At present the workers most concerned are the dockers and transport workers. At the time of writing this article the bus services over a large part of England are at a standstill owing to the strike of workers for the Midland Red Bus Company, which affects thirteen counties and is the greatest transport strike since 1926. The cause of this strike is the attempt on the part of the management to impose schedules which are even worse than the existing bad ones, but other issues have since become involved and there is no doubt that the bus workers are in a militant mood and are showing great solidarity. During this strike the workers have shown a tendency to use direct action methods, such as lying down

in the road to prevent the buses driven by blackleg drivers from being taken out of the garages.

The London dockers are using direct action methods in their go-slow struggle, which has already been going on for some seven weeks in an attempt to force the employers to grant higher wages, and to get rid of the irksome conditions of working which were imposed under the excuse of wartime necessity. The employers have replied by withdrawing work from the dockers in an attempt to break the strike. At the Surrey docks steam was cut off from the ships when the stevedores refused to give a guarantee to work normally, and some 800 workers at these docks were virtually locked out. Nevertheless, the dockers are still carrying on their struggle in spite of the attacks of the employers and the betrayals of the union leaders. Meanwhile, throughout the country, at Grimsby, Swansea, Cardiff and on the Clyde, there have been strikes of dockers, and there is so much discontent in this industry that a national strike is not improbable. At Swansea and Grimsby the state has tried to break the strikes by using soldiers as blackleg labour to unload ships.

Meanwhile, in other industries many small strikes, including strikes in the coal mines, are taking place.

# Scandalous of Spanis

The recent suicide of a Spanish prisoner in a prisoner-of-war camp at Kirkham Lancashire has brought to light a situation of the most flagrant injustice. In this case, the prisoner, who was a member of the Spanish Loyalist forces, was held in a camp where he was treated with the most brutal and inhuman conditions. The suicide was a direct result of the lack of food, shelter, and medical care. This case highlights the need for international pressure to ensure the humane treatment of all prisoners of war.





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Meanwhile, in other industries many small disputes, lightning strikes, go slow campaigns, are occurring which never reach the notice of the press. A correspondent tells us of a lightning strike in the British Celanese factory at Derby, where the finishing department and the dyehouse went on strike for a bonus. This strike was broken by the local Trade Union officials using threats to persuade the employees to return to work.

The two important factors in the recent wave of strikes have been, firstly, that the trade unions have acted against the workers and attempted to get them back to work, thus demonstrating that they will continue in peacetime, the reactionary policy of collaboration with the state which they followed during the war, and, secondly, that the workers are showing a tendency to abandon the traditional form of strike and to adopt syndicalist methods of direct action which cause much more harm to the employers than a mere withdrawal of labour. These two facts indicate that the industrial disputes of the forthcoming period of struggle may well take a social revolutionary character.

One interesting strike remains to be mentioned, that of the drinkers of Boyle, a town in Eire, who have banded themselves together and taken a pledge to give up drinking for the time being as a protest against the price of porter being raised by a penny a pint. A demonstration is to be held, and pickets are to be placed outside the doors of public houses. The association founded to carry out this campaign is said to contain almost every male drinker in the town, and the public houses are empty. This type of boycott by consumers is one which has often been used with effect in Ireland, but which has been tried very little in this country. It might well have helped to solve the problems of the victims of food queues, if it had been used on a wide enough scale.

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## NEW THE WAR COM

With the approach of a nominal state of peace, the title WAR COMMEMORATORY becomes obsolete, and has been decided to change it to FREEDOM, with the sub-title THROUGH ANARCHISM. The name FREEDOM is one which has been associated with the Anarchist movement in this country ever since its early days of propaganda. For forty years, from 1886 until 1926, the anarchist periodical in this country



INDUSTRIAL OPPRESSION



# For Anarchism

# COMMENTARY

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"The timorous pale with fear and the conservative are scandalized when they hear our words; but to-morrow the timorous and the conservative will applaud them. The timorous and conservative who to-day adore Christ were they who yesterday condemned and crucified him as a rebel. They who to-day are rearing statues to men of genius, persecuted them yesterday, loaded them with chains or threw them to the bonfire. They who tortured Galileo, and forced him to retract, glorify him to-day; they who burned Giordano Bruno alive; to-day admire him; the hands that tugged at the rope which hanged John Brown, were the ones that later, in the Civil War, broke the chains of slavery; they who condemned, excommunicated and degraded Hidalgo, to-day venerate him; the tremulous hands that lifted the hemlock to the lips of Socrates, to-day are penning tearful defences of that Titan of thought."

RICARDO FLORES MAGON.

Fortnightly, 2d.

## ELL TO FREEDOM

thoughts than those of the interests of the English oil companies in Rumania, of the Anglo-American interests in Poland and Turkey, of the British commercial infiltration into Greece and Yugoslavia, of the battle for the sea-ways through which the profitable trade in Ford cars and Westinghouse refrigerators with the European countries will be carried on . . . In reality these are the fundamental problems. Churchill and Truman are at Potsdam to negotiate new markets, Stalin, in order to try to "legitimise" Russia's domination of one part of Europe. The question of Germany also needs to be settled. There is an "equitable" distribution of the booty and of reparations to be made. It is therefore better to keep even the agenda of the conference secret.

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the 8th Chinese Army under Communist control moved from Yen-an to the region of Shanghai. Stalin's men wanted to be on the coast in case an American landing took place. It is just a means like any other to get acknowledgement as a Power.

In spite of these manoeuvres the position of America in the Far East seems a solid one. The United States and Great Britain know that if Russia gets hold of Manchuria and Korea she will practically rule Asia. We can expect a very hot game and we are present only at the beginning of it. Will America and England go to the length of a negotiated peace with Japan in order to prevent the Soviet Union from joining in? Is this the real meaning of the peace rumours and of the project for an armistice which Truman is supposed to have taken to Potsdam? The question remains open.

## THE BERLIN BACKGROUND

Rarely has the contrast between the way in which the ruling classes live and that in which the poor are forced to exist been shown more clearly than in connection with the conference of the Big Three at Berlin. The *News Chronicle* for 16th July tells us of the abundance of good foods which will appear at the conference.

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"Choice wines have been flown from Bordeaux and rare bottles of Angostura bitters from the West Indies. Turkey, ham, tongue, fruits and vegetables have been gathered in abundance."

The contrast with the background of starving Berlin is shown by the paragraph which follows immediately in the *News Chronicle* report.

"In one small section of Berlin the grave food crisis was eased this morning by the ready co-operation of Russians and British, thanks to which the 180,000 famished inhabitants of Charlottenburg, in the heart of the British sector, had their first fat rations for weeks.

"The Russians allocated to Charlottenburg 2 tons of butter, 4 tons of cheese and 19 tons of lard from a large food dump outside Berlin. The British provided transport. Enough was given out to last ten days on the present Berlin ration level."

A simple calculation shows that, divided among the 180,000 people in question, the rations for ten days amounted to approximately two-fifths of an ounce of butter, four-fifths of an ounce of cheese and 3½ oz. of lard. It would be interesting, on a similar basis, to calculate the amount of food which will be consumed by Mr. Churchill during the same period.

# Scandalous Treatment of Spanish Prisoners

The recent suicide of a Spanish prisoner in a prisoner-of-war camp at Kirkham in Lancashire has brought to light a situation of the most flagrant injustice. In this camp

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were brought over to England, where they were put into a camp with German prisoners of war. Here they have been kept as prisoners of war, not even being given the privileges which are given to Italians in this country. Even from the point of view of supporters of the war, it is illogical to keep men who have been consistent antagonists of the Nazis in the same camp as Nazi prisoners, and the injustice of this proceeding calls for immediate agitation to secure the release of these men. The Spaniards in question have themselves gone on hunger strike in protest, but so far without producing any effect on unimaginative army authorities.

## NEW TITLE FOR WAR COMMENTARY

With the approach of a nominal state of peace, the title **WAR COMMENTARY** becomes obsolete, and it has been decided to change it to **FREEDOM**, with the sub-title of **THROUGH ANARCHISM**. The name **FREEDOM** is one which has been associated with the Anarchist movement in this country ever since its early days of propaganda. For forty years, from 1886 until 1926, the anarchist periodical in this country

bore the name of **FREEDOM**, and for nearly sixty years the *Freedom Press* has been the main group publishing anarchist literature in England. Nor has the name been limited only to the English anarchist movement. Among others, there was the German anarchist paper, **FREIHEIT**, which was edited by Johann Most.

The change in the title will come into operation with the next issue but one, dated the 25th August.



OPPRESSION



# ASPECTS OF ANARCHISM

## II. THE COMMUNE

Anarchism, being a doctrine based upon the liberty of the individual, rejects the State, an artificially created super-structure to which the individual is subject. Needless to say, it does not therefore reject either co-operation or control.

### Co-operation

The capitalist when he rejects State control interfering with his personal independence, is unable to achieve freedom in its true meaning, because he cannot dispense with the State, which he needs to keep down other individuals in society—i.e. the mass of society, the "have-nots". In order to maintain economic exploitation, the capitalist requires political oppression in greater or lesser form. To-day, the politicians by wielding more and more power, tend to oust the capitalist who created them; hence the capitalist's cry for less State control does not mean that he wants freedom from the State, but that he wants the State "in its proper place", i.e., keeping down the workers and not interfering with the capitalist himself.

The State therefore can be seen to arise out of the coercion exercised over society by one section of it. However, prior to the modern State, and even prior to any State at all, individuals always banded themselves together, and naturally formed themselves into organized societies, for purposes of co-operation, in matters of mutual aid in all the common necessities of life, and for defence against predatory hordes. Thomas Paine put it that society was a product of our wants, government of our wickedness. We cannot avoid organizing into a common bond of society, which in itself does not interfere with any individual liberty save that of interfering with other people's liberty. There is a clear distinction between society and the State which arises out of coercion, not mutual aid.

Although the State assumes more and more the functions of society by taking control of the means of livelihood and expression, that does not make the State a useful organism. It takes control of such essentials (e.g. education as the obvious example) not to foster their growth but to increase its own power. Sometimes its intervention may not be harmful, but that does not alter the role of the State any more than a policeman becomes a useful member of society if in the course of protecting Capitalist Law, he sees an old lady across the road. His chief function remains unaltered whatever side-lines he may be engaged in. Although, therefore, every law passed by the State and every one of the functions it takes need not in itself be harmful (as in matters of sanitation, etc.) the fact remains that these have been acquired from another source, and the essentially harmful character of the State remains unaltered.

### The Role Of The Commune

The fundamental form of human society is not the State, but the Commune, which exists in some form, debased or otherwise, in every country and under all régimes, however hated it may be by the Total State, which filches its departments gradually (as Hitler abolished all the independent cities and provinces remaining in Germany on his arrival to power.).

Organized society has always gathered at its focal point to express its wishes, originally for all purposes, and in particular defence, culture and social administration. This was strongest in the Middle Ages, when the commune had great local auto-

pal councils has no attractions for us, and in the forthcoming municipal elections we shall still pursue an abstentionist policy.

To-day omniscient fishmongers and retired clergymen are elected on to Councils by reason of a glib tongue or a full pocket, in order not to serve the municipality but to control it themselves. They themselves obviously do not supply it with water, gas, electricity, education, sewerage system and the rest of the municipal services—they are there to employ those who do. Thus it can be clearly seen that the distinction between the present council, the "unfree commune", and the free commune advocated by anarchists, is the difference between local government and local administration.

In an anarchist commune there would be no local government. There would be no one there to rule, hence no council chamber. But there would still be municipal administration, which would be the basis of society.

Thus all social life would be the direct responsibility of the commune—that is to say, of all the people in a locality. Now it is plain that they would direct the work to be done in different forms in different societies.

In an agricultural or village commune the principles of anarchist-communism can be seen working quite clearly, in that the members of the locality can themselves meet and decide the work to be done; for instance, in a farming community where the members of the community and the actual workers themselves would be the same.

### The Commune And The Syndicates

In an industrialized society the workings are more complex: hence anarcho-syndicalism. The commune could not meet as a grouping of all the people because the number would be too vast. (A revival of the old towns' meeting to alter general decisions, however, might be a possibility). Hence its functions have to be again decentralized, and they would be decentralized into syndicates. The syndicate would group all workers at each place of work, to run the work they themselves were doing, e.g. builders would decide how they would build houses insofar as their working conditions, etc. were concerned. Obviously, however, the builders' syndicate would not tell people in what houses they would live (flats, semi-detached, etc.); this the people can decide for themselves. The job of the builders is to build. Again, printers would decide how they would work, but would not act as literary censors. Syndicalism presupposes workers' control over the job they are doing, but in its libertarian form rules out the possibility of a majority dictatorship.

Inevitably the safeguard must be made that all persons must have access to the land, the tools and the raw material; so that if persons were not satisfied with the way things went they could in the last analysis do the job themselves. If someone wanted a house in the Moorish style, or craftsmanship in weaving and pottery, and there was no-one prepared to do it for him in the respective workers' syndicates, clearly he would have the opportunity to do it himself, without prevention by

Finally, it is clear that the commune is the basis of anarchist society. It can only exist as a free commune, within a society composed of free communes, insofar as every individual within it is free, and it is not subordinate to any central or other authority.

The commune is not a dream of the future. We are often accused that the commune is a relic of the past. To an extent it is: the point is that it has always existed, but as State control grows, the commune dwindles to the degenerate mockery of to-day. Adapted to modern needs, amended to suit all the individuals within society, and fitted into a free society, the Commune is the basis of Anarchism. It can be created in embryo within present society, as a local centre of revolutionary agitation (as has been done in many countries in recent years) but such an embryo, being only part of the workers, should, like the industrial organizations of anarcho-syndicalism, under capitalism, not be confused with the ultimate idea of the commune grouping everyone within society; the syndicate everyone within the respective industry.

In these respects, in the sense that everyone in a free society is the commune, and everyone in industry forms the syndicates, Anarchists adopt the slogan:

Economic control to the syndicates,  
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## A Council of War

Freely translated from the Latin of Claudian (c.400 A.D.) by Obadiah Hornbook, B.A.

So here the People's Leaders congregate  
To heal the numerous evils of the State.  
Young pups, old buffers, celebrated far  
For prowess in the buffet and the bar,  
The guzzling-champions of the Anthracum  
Who price the several dishes as they see 'em,  
The knights who sit while salients rise and fall  
Cramming clam chowder round the Capitol  
Or where the Kremlin's mighty meals extend  
Vistas of People's Dishes without end—  
Christ, what a feed! Not all the season's trout  
Would iron half these famous bulges out—  
Dress suits, stuffed shirts, they liberate and smoke  
They laugh like drains at every futile joke  
And serried ranks of Democrats-to-be  
Talk more of horses than of history.  
The flunkies bawls—they cluster round to greet  
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Organized society has always gathered at its focal point to express its wishes, originally for all purposes, and in particular defence, culture and social administration. This was strongest in the Middle Ages, when the commune had great local autonomy even against the kings and barons, which was stolen from it as the bourgeoisie rose. Kropotkin has dealt with the role of the mediæval commune very thoroughly in this regard.

To-day we still see the commune existing in a debased form as to its function, in the parish, town and county councils. These are units theoretically self-governing, for the purposes of local administration, the relics of the mediæval commune in form, but in fact they are merely organs of local government, i.e. merely departments of the State organized locally, carrying out the State's functions of administering society in a cheap fashion. The State is obliged to administer society as best it can and it has created local government in order to do so in certain regards in a cheap form.

Nevertheless the abolition of the local council is an inevitable result of State centralization. In the present-day struggle between centralization and decentralization, the local forms of government are becoming subordinate to the central government. This is clearly not a matter for regret, since local government has degenerated into a cheap form of central government, and the reason for its disappearance is merely the desire to control everything from Whitehall.

Thus while the commune idea is the basis of anarchism, it can be seen that the conquest of power *via* the existing municipi-

forms in different societies.

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Thus the Commune would in all cases be the expression of all the people in a locality. In an industrial community it would need to delegate certain functions to the workers in the industries concerned. It would be composed of all these workers plus the rest of the community (invalids, aged, sick, etc., who might themselves perhaps form their own estcional groupings within a free society).

The Free Commune would therefore be concerned with all social affairs; while economic affairs would be the task of the respective syndicates concerned. An Anarchist society would be a federation of free communes, over a given region (ignoring national boundaries). A commune's boundaries would be determined by people's needs and requirements. It could be as small as a single farm, or as large as London, but obviously a federation of all the communes is needed for such inter-dependent services as transport, postal facilities, etc., running parallel with a federation of all the respective syndicates. This is necessary for purposes of planning, locally, regionally and federally. Planning is not inimical to freedom, as suggested by capitalists to-day. They oppose State planning but obviously support capitalist private planning. We support workers' planning, in free co-operation amongst the peoples concerned.

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Talk more of horses than of history.  
The flunkey bawls—they cluster round to greet  
The latest liberator from the street  
The latest son of impudence and pelf  
Who talks of traitors, and is one himself,  
Hallowed by Churchill's word, and evening dress,  
And every canard in the Kelmsley Press.  
True Democrats! who, where the sock begins,  
Bear marks of well-earned fetters on their shins!  
Guardians of Liberty, around whose board  
Gangster and pimp turn Premier and Lord,  
Concocting to beguile the folk they barter  
Some other canard like the Atlantic Charter,  
Forget the things they came there to debate  
Bandy blue jokes and private Billingsgate,  
Jockeys and shows, the culture of the times  
From Noel Coward down to Morgan's rhymes,  
Catchwords they've learned, of Shakespeare's or of Burke's,  
And Passages from their Unpublished Works,  
While keen controversy runs round the tables—  
Some plump for Turner's legs and some for Grable's.  
Till "Gentlemen! To business! There's a war on!"  
Croaks out their chairman, like a sweat-shop foreman  
(When slaves murmur and resume their tasks  
As Bevin orders or as profit asks).

Vide Claudius Claudianus, Oxford Book of Latin Verse  
366, p.412

# THE WAR IN THE FAR EAST

**D**URING a recent London strike a Labour stooge asked the workers, "What would you say if I told you you were letting down the boys we sent to Burma?" and an anonymous voice replied, "We'd ask you what bloody right you had to send them there." We cannot sum up the position better. During the Election

Government is attacked, but only on occasion. Most war propagandists, even those careful to differentiate between "Nazis" and "Germans", "Fascists" and "Italians", merely refer to the "Japs". Some consider the Emperor to be a peace-loving man who wants to rule constitutionally but is in the hands of his military caste.

### "RE-EDUCATION"

It is significant that whereas they spoke of "re-educating" the Germans, nobody talks of "re-educating the Japanese". It would be a joke for Britain and the U.S.A. to speak of re-educating a people they themselves had educated. The evil the Japanese ruling-class were taught

were pleased to see a docile proletariat. When the proletariat became less docile, and the military caste was obliged to carry out a few massacres to keep them down, the effect on the international conscience was to cause a jump in Japanese bonds.

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DURING a recent London strike a Labour stooge asked the workers, "What would you say if I told you you were letting down the boys we sent to Burma?" and an anonymous voice replied, "We'd ask you what bloody right you had to send them there." We cannot sum up the position better. During the Election campaign many candidates were questioned about the war in the Far East. It was obvious from their surprise that they had never questioned the need for it at all, since all parties had tacitly agreed to place it, alongside the German monarchy and the brothel-keeping bishops, amongst the subjects beyond controversy which no loyal Briton would worry about. They "explained" the war in terms of backing up the troops in Burma, etc., and rescuing the prisoners-of-war in Japanese hands, all obviously consequent upon the fact of a war, and nothing whatever to do with the need for a war. They could not explain the war any other way, and fell back on attacking the Japanese system, but were quite unable to suggest any alternative to it. In the end, most of them fell back on sheer crude racial hatred of the lowest type.

War propaganda for the Japanese War is in fact relying solely on crude "anti-yellow" stuff, the vilest of all coming from the United States, which since the downfall of Nazi Germany is perhaps the world centre for racial hatred doctrines. It is not hard to discern that the main objection to the Japanese system of government from these sources lies in the fact that its subjects do not belong to the brownish-pink "white" race. The harsh discrimination against Japanese-Americans is nothing but the logical outcome of the discrimination against Afro-Americans and similar racial minorities in the States. The war with Japan gives them a good excuse to peddle this line, which has spurred forth emulations of Nazi principles ranging from the erasure of the names of Japanese-American veterans of the last war from memorial stones to the wholesale deportation of families out of their homes and farms.

In so far as there has been any propaganda over here in regard to the Japanese War, it has timidly followed on the American race-hatred line; our Government has not given us such a full dose of colour-prejudice and "Japanese-are-animals" bilge, for the simple reason that it knows people not brought up to colour-hatred will not swallow it, and its sole effect will be to further widen the gulf between its European and its Asiatic subjects.

Putting aside the crude propaganda which taken to its logical conclusion means that we have to fight everyone whose features are different from our own, we find that no ideological excuse whatever is put forward to justify the war against Japan. It is true the system of

Government is attacked, but only on occasion. Most war propagandists, even those careful to differentiate between "Nazis" and "Germans", "Fascists" and "Italians", merely refer to the "Japs". Some consider the Emperor to be a peace-loving man who wants to rule constitutionally but is in the hands of his military caste. Others (anxious to have a figurehead to pin all the evil on to) have fastened on the Emperor as the source of all evil, Hirohito being conveniently rigged out beside Hitler and Mussolini. Yet others picked on Tojo during his tenure of office. Some attack "Jap militarism" but what is the difference between "Jap militarism" and the "Prussian militarism" we crushed for ever in the last war, and any other militarism? Why do none of them attack the system in Japan, as they did that in Germany and Italy? For a very simple reason. The system has no fancy name such as "Fascism", it is plainly Capitalism, and if our ruling class were hesitant about calling themselves anti-fascist, they are even more hesitant about calling themselves anti-capitalist.

## RICARDO FLORES MAGON

In his series on "Little Known English Anarchists" in last issue, Mat Kavanagh made mention of the Mexican Revolution. The full story of the Mexican Revolution has yet to be told in this country, and the manner in which the Mexican peons attempted to put into being an Anarchist society is one that would be a very inspiring story if it were published here.

Very briefly, one can say that from the time of President Juarez's rebellion against the Hapsburg Emperor, installed by Napoleon III of France, American capitalism had been increasing its stranglehold on Mexico, and the numerous rebellions in Mexico were directed not only against the existing governments, but in fact also against continued foreign despotism. Like other Latin American countries, Mexico was an economic colony.

In the struggle led by Pancho Villa against the dictator Porfirio Diaz, the Anarchists played a major part amongst the peons; and in the struggles of the Mexican Revolution from 1910 and 1915, they were the spearhead of the Mexican working-class and peasants, under the slogan of "Land and Liberty". Outstanding figures were Ricardo Flores Magon and his brother Enrique, both as theoreticians and fighters; likewise Zapata, the almost legendary figure whose army moved across the country, with a libertarian community sheltering behind it all the way.

Ricardo Flores Magon finally fell a victim to

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It is significant that whereas they spoke of "re-educating" the Germans, nobody talks of "re-educating the Japanese". It would be a joke for Britain and the U.S.A. to speak of re-educating a people they themselves had educated. The evil the Japanese ruling-class were taught they executed, even if they have succeeded in bettering the instructions. When the great Western powers found the old feudal land of Japan unlocked, they had before them an open field. Closed for centuries to the foreigner, Japan was suddenly opened to the capitalist world. They took her in hand, an infant sprung upon the world, and moulded her in the most profitable course to themselves. The country was rapidly industrialised. The old feudal barons, the ancient aristocracy, survived by adapting themselves to the new régime, and becoming the big industrialists. The working-class and the peasants remained in abject misery, only increased by the "benefits" of the West.

This hardly bothered the "educators"; they

were pleased to see a docile proletariat. When the proletariat became less docile, and the military caste was obliged to carry out a few massacres to keep them down, the effect on the international conscience was to cause a jump in Japanese bonds.

In those years Japan was boosted to British children as "the Britain of the East"; it was glorified in song and story as the "land of the Cherry Blossom"; and Edwardian music-hall audiences were encouraged to sing of the Japanese soldier "off to fight for the freedom and right of dear old Japan". The song is not so popular to-day.

Japanese civilisation is older than ours; the Japanese are not a backward people in the technical sense; as a result, the Japanese capitalists learnt more quickly than was expected. They developed into a menace to their capitalist neighbours, economically and, as a consequence, militarily. First of all, Russia. Then, Germany. Then, China. Then, Britain and America and their satellites. At last Japan ceased to be "a land of happy smiling people". We suddenly began to realise that atrocities were committed there.

For what purpose is the war in the Far East dragging on? Some talk of annexation and colonising the country, thus clearly demonstrating the real imperial nature of the war. It cannot be to "re-educate" them. We have already done that. They say they are going to crush Japanese militarism but to destroy militarism means to destroy government, and what are they going to put in its place? They cannot destroy capitalism there without putting in a workers' régime; and no-one in their senses imagines the capitalist class here is going to do that. The fact is that they can only retain the same system in Japan as operates at present after perhaps some controversy as to whether to treat Hirohito personally like Goering or like Badoglio. Their choice is capitalism or revolution; and they will inevitably choose capitalism.

The Government has made no ideological smoke-screen for the war against Japan as it did in the war against Germany, because it cannot. The invasion scare can hardly be used now even by senile tribunal chairmen; and no thoughtful person can accept a "Vansittartist" case against the Japanese, when there, more than in any country in the world, there is the widest gulf possible between the upper classes and the lower. The only evidence offered against this is the way in which the lower classes allow themselves to be killed in war (a fact for which Allied soldiers are praised!); which is on reflection scarcely surprising when one considers their low expectation of survival and poor prospects in life.

We are entitled to say, therefore, that the war



# THE PRINCIPLES OF ANARCHISM

## II. THE COMMUNE

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## FREEDOM DEFENCE COMMITTEE

The trial of the four anarchists in April last revealed at least four important facts. Firstly, there is a tendency on the part of the ruling class towards an ever-increasing restriction of individual liberties of speech and action—in so far as this can be done without attracting widespread public attention and condemnation. Secondly, an extensive and semi-secret political police, the Special Branch of Scotland Yard, already exists to assist in these attacks on civil liberties. Thirdly, there remains a considerable desire among all sections of the population to resist such encroachments, as was shown by the unexpectedly good response to the work of the Freedom Press Defence Committee. And, fourthly, no permanent organisation exists that is willing and able to maintain a vigilant watch over individual liberties and to expose and fight against any further attacks on them.

For this reason it has been decided to reconstitute the Freedom Press Defence Committee, and form it into a permanent vigilance body, called the Freedom Defence Committee, to uphold the essential liberty of individuals and organisations and to defend those who are persecuted for exercising their rights to freedom of speech, writing and action.

The Freedom Defence Committee recognises that its function cannot be limited to the defence of individual cases alone. It also considers itself bound to work, alone or in conjunction with other organisations or individuals, for the elimination of those laws and institutions which in themselves form a grave and general threat to individual freedom.

The Committee will therefore fight for the abolition of Military and Industrial Conscription, of the Emergency Powers Act and the Defence Regulations, of all existing statutes restricting freedom of political action, and of the Political Police which has played so active a part in attacks on freedom of expression.

### Amnesty Campaign

The immediate campaign on which the Committee intends to embark is for an amnesty for all political prisoners, conscientious objectors and other persons who have been imprisoned for offences against the conscription law or other extraordinary wartime legislation. The end of the war has brought release to the fascist internees held under Defence Regulation 18B, but there are still many thousands of wartime prisoners in civil and military prisons and detention camps, and it is against the manifest injustice of their continued imprisonment that the Committee intends to fight. A demand to the Home Secretary for an amnesty is being organised, and it is hoped that all those who are willing to help will obtain demand forms from the



anarchist-communist can be seen working quite clearly: in that the members of the locality can themselves meet and decide the work to be done; for instance, in a farming community where the members of the community and the actual workers themselves would be the same.

## The Commune And The Syndicates

In an industrialized society the workings are more complex: hence anarcho-syndicalism. The commune could not meet as a grouping of all the people because the number would be too vast. (A revival of the old towns' meeting to alter general decisions, however, might be a possibility). Hence its functions have to be again decentralized, and they would be decentralized into syndicates. The syndicate would group all workers at each place of work, to run the work they themselves were doing, e.g. builders would decide how they would build houses insofar as their working conditions, etc. were concerned. Obviously, however, the builders' syndicate would not tell people in what houses they would live (flats, semi-detached, etc.); this the people can decide for themselves. The job of the builders is to build. Again, printers would decide how they would work, but would not act as literary censors. Syndicalism presupposes workers' control over the job they are doing, but in its libertarian form rules out the possibility of a majority dictatorship.

Inevitably the safeguard must be made that all persons must have access to the land, the tools and the raw material; so that if persons were not satisfied with the way things went they could in the last analysis do the job themselves. If someone wanted a house in the Moorish style, or craftsmanship in weaving and pottery, and there was no-one prepared to do it for him in the respective workers' syndicates, clearly he would have the opportunity to do it himself, without prevention by money or other monopolies.

Thus the Commune would in all cases be the expression of all the people in a locality. In an industrial community it would need to delegate certain functions to the workers in the industries concerned. It would be composed of all these workers plus the rest of the community (invalids, aged, sick, etc., who might themselves perhaps form their own estcional groupings within a free society).

The Free Commune would therefore be concerned with all social affairs; while economic affairs would be the task of the respective syndicates concerned. An Anarchist society would be a federation of free communes, over a given region (ignoring national boundaries). A commune's boundaries would be determined by people's needs and requirements. It could be as small as a single farm, or as large as London, but obviously a federation of all the communes is needed for such inter-dependent services as transport, postal facilities, etc., running parallel with a federation of all the respective syndicates. This is necessary for purposes of planning, locally, regionally and federally. Planning is not inimical to freedom, as suggested by capitalists to-day. They oppose State planning but obviously support capitalist private planning. We support workers' planning, in free co-operation amongst the peoples concerned.

is the commune, and everyone in industry forms, the syndicates, Anarchists adopt the slogan:  
Economic control to the syndicates,  
social control to the communes.

A.M.

## A Council of War

Freely translated from the Latin of Claudian (c.400 A.D.)  
by Obadiah Hornbook, B.A.

So here the People's Leaders congregate  
To heal the numerous evils of the State.  
Young pups, old buffers, celebrated far  
For prowess in the buffet and the bar,  
The guzzling-champions of the Anthracum  
Who price the several dishes as they see 'em,  
The knights who sit while salients rise and fall  
Cramming clam chowder round the Capitol  
Or where the Kremlin's mighty meals extend  
Vistas of People's Dishes without end—  
Christ, what a feed! Not all the season's trout  
Would iron half these famous bulges out—  
Dress suits, stuffed shirts, they liberate and smoke  
They laugh like drains at every futile joke  
And serried ranks of Democrats-to-be  
Talk more of horses than of history.  
The flunkey bawls—they cluster round to greet  
The latest liberator from the street  
The latest son of impudence and pelf  
Who talks of traitors, and is one himself,  
Hallowed by Churchill's word, and evening dress,  
And every canard in the Kelmsley Press.  
True Democrats! who, where the sock begins,  
Bear marks of well-earned fetters on their shins!  
Guardians of Liberty, around whose board  
Gangster and pimp turn Premier and Lord,  
Concocting to beguile the folk they barter  
Some other canard like the Atlantic Charter,  
Forget the things they came there to debate  
Bandy blue jokes and private Billingsgate,  
Jockeys and shows, the culture of the times  
From Noel Coward down to Morgan's rhymes,  
Catchwords they've learned, of Shakespeare's or of Burke's,  
And Passages from their Unpublished Works,  
While keen controversy runs round the tables—  
Some plump for Turner's legs and some for Grable's.  
Till "Gentlemen! To business! There's a war on!"  
Croaks out their chairman, like a sweat-shop foreman  
(When slavies murmur and resume their tasks  
As Bevin orders or as profit asks).

Vide Claudius Claudianus, Oxford Book of Latin Verse,  
366, p.412.

The Freedom Defence Committee recognises that its function cannot be limited to the defence of individual cases alone. It also considers itself bound to work, alone or in conjunction with other organisations or individuals, for the elimination of those laws and institutions which in themselves form a grave and general threat to individual freedom.

The Committee will therefore fight for the abolition of Military and Industrial Conscription, of the Emergency Powers Act and the Defence Regulations, of all existing statutes restricting freedom of political action, and of the Political Police which has played so active a part in attacks on freedom of expression.

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The Committee is comprised of individuals who have proved themselves active in this struggle for freedom. Its members are drawn from many channels of liberal, socialist, pacifist and libertarian opinion. The chairman of the Freedom Defence Committee is Herbert Read, the vice-chairman George Orwell, and the secretary Ingeborg Roskelly.

It is hoped that all those who are able will help in the work of the committee, by giving office assistance, by giving publicity to its actions in conversation and in the press, and by giving their financial support. All the office work of the Committee is performed voluntarily, but it is necessary to have funds for numerous expenses such as rent, printing, postage, stationery, legal fees, etc. Those who are willing to help financially can become associates of the Committee for a subscription of ten shillings a year, which will entitle them to receive literature concerning the activities of the Committee.

The work of the Committee is urgent. Our liberties are being steadily filched from us, and the need for a body to watch for and fight against the advance of tyranny is imperative. Give us your continued support by sending whatever you can to help us maintain the fight for a real freedom.

GEORGE WOODCOCK, Treasurer,  
FREEDOM DEFENCE COMMITTEE,  
17, St. George Street, Hanover Square,  
— W.1. —

# WAR IN THE FAR EAST

Government is attacked, but only on occasion.

Most war propagandists, even those careful to differentiate between "Nazis" and "Germans", "Fascists" and "Italians", merely refer to the "Japs". Some consider the Emperor to be a peace-loving man who wants to rule constitutionally but is in the hands of his military caste. Others (anxious to have a figurehead to pin all the evil on to) have fastened on the Emperor as

## "RE-EDUCATION"

It is significant that whereas they spoke of "re-educating" the Germans, nobody talks of "re-educating the Japanese". It would be a joke for Britain and the U.S.A. to speak of re-educating a people they themselves had educated. The evil the Japanese ruling-class were taught they executed, even if they have succeeded in bettering the instructions. When the great

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## RICARDO FLORES MAGON

In his series on "Little Known English Anarchists" in last issue, Mat Kavanagh made mention of the Mexican Revolution. The full story of the Mexican Revolution has yet to be told in this country, and the manner in which the Mexican peons attempted to put into being an Anarchist society is one that would be a very inspiring story if it were published here.

Very briefly, one can say that from the time of President Juarez's rebellion against the Hapsburg Emperor, installed by Napoleon III of France, American capitalism had been increasing its stranglehold on Mexico, and the numerous rebellions in Mexico were directed not only against the existing governments, but in fact also against continued foreign despotism. Like other Latin American countries, Mexico was an economic colony.

In the struggle led by Pancho Villa against the dictator Porfirio Diaz, the Anarchists played a major part amongst the peons; and in the struggles of the Mexican Revolution from 1910 and 1915, they were the spearhead of the Mexican working-class and peasants, under the slogan of "Land and Liberty". Outstanding figures were Ricardo Flores Magon and his brother Enrique, both as theoreticians and fighters; likewise Zapata, the almost legendary figure whose army moved across the country, with a libertarian community sheltering behind it all the way.

Ricardo Flores Magon finally fell a victim to

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It is significant that whereas they spoke of "re-educating" the Germans, nobody talks of "re-educating the Japanese". It would be a joke for Britain and the U.S.A. to speak of re-educating a people they themselves had educated. The evil the Japanese ruling-class were taught they executed, even if they have succeeded in bettering the instructions. When the great Western powers found the old feudal land of Japan unlocked, they had before them an open field. Closed for centuries to the foreigner, Japan was suddenly opened to the capitalist world. They took her in hand, an infant sprung upon the world, and moulded her in the most profitable course to themselves. The country was rapidly industrialised. The old feudal barons, the ancient aristocracy, survived by adapting themselves to the new régime, and becoming the big industrialists. The working-class and the peasants remained in abject misery, only increased by the "benefits" of the West.

This hardly bothered the "educators"; they

capitalist revenge, misnamed "justice"; he was imprisoned in California, and died within a few hours of being released from Leavenworth Prison where he was in fact, gradually murdered.

The Mexican Revolution was not successful in that the peasants did not succeed in taking Land and Liberty; instead, the politicians came to the forefront and seized the opportunity to build a new Republic. They took care to see that the Revolution was stamped out; but they tried to buy over the Revolutionists; all of whom indignantly refused the offers made to them by the President.

Magon has now been dead many years; the crowning insult to his memory comes in a proposal that his remains be transferred to the Pantheon of Illustrious Men (a Mexican secular equivalent to say Westminster Abbey), as a "great patriot". This Magon unquestionably was not; in his writings and in his actions he maintained a firm Anarchist position. Against this cynical decision of the Government which persecuted him and his comrades while alive, our Mexican comrades have energetically protested, and we have the manifesto of the "Tierra y Libertad" group before us, which lucidly explains how incongruous and how degrading this proposal would be. To the protests has been added the voice of Maria Broust, lifelong companion of Ricardo Flores Magon, who remains to echo his words in defence of his Anarchist ideals.

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In those years Japan was boosted to British children as "the Britain of the East"; it was glorified in song and story as the "land of the Cherry Blossom"; and Edwardian music-hall audiences were encouraged to sing of the Japanese soldier "off to fight for the freedom and right of dear old Japan". The song is not so popular to-day.

Japanese civilisation is older than ours; the Japanese are not a backward people in the technical sense; as a result, the Japanese capitalists learnt more quickly than was expected. They developed into a menace to their capitalist neighbours, economically and, as a consequence, militarily. First of all, Russia. Then, Germany. Then, China. Then, Britain and America and their satellites. At last Japan ceased to be "a land of happy smiling people". We suddenly began to realise that atrocities were committed there.

For what purpose is the war in the Far East dragging on? Some talk of annexation and colonising the country, thus clearly demonstrating the real imperial nature of the war. It cannot be to "re-educate" them. We have already done that. They say they are going to crush Japanese militarism but to destroy militarism means to destroy government, and what are they going to put in its place? They cannot destroy capitalism there without putting in a workers' régime; and no-one in their senses imagines the capitalist class here is going to do that. The fact is that they can only retain the same system in Japan as operates at present, after perhaps some controversy as to whether to treat Hirohito personally like Goering or like Badoglio. Their choice is capitalism or revolution; and they will inevitably choose capitalism.

The Government has made no ideological smoke-screen for the war against Japan as it did in the war against Germany, because it cannot. The invasion scare can hardly be used now even by senile tribunal chairmen; and no thoughtful person can accept a "Vansittartist" case against the Japanese, when there, more than in any country in the world, there is the widest gulf possible between the upper classes and the lower. The only evidence offered against this is the way in which the lower classes allow themselves to be killed in war (a fact for which Allied soldiers are praised!); which is on reflection scarcely surprising when one considers their low expectation of survival and poor prospects in life.

We are entitled to say, therefore, that the war

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has taken an even more sharply and obviously imperialist character; that the main issues are obviously the re-conquest of colonial possessions, for the profit of Stock Exchange operators and City and Wall Street bondholders, anxious for their tin and oil and rubber, and oblivious to the blood and tears and sweat.

Against this cynical exploitation of human life for a few people's selfish gain plus the swaggering political desire to assert "national honour", what can be done to prevent this holocaust in the Far East, which may well, failing a surrender by the Japanese generals, drag on for years, wiping out the best of the coming generation?

It has been seen very plainly that political power is worse than useless. Few soldiers want to go to the East, far fewer want to stay there. They actually had the "opportunity", technically, of "ruling themselves" in the democratic fashion; that is to say, an Election was held. It is reported from all sides that a majority of troops concerned who could vote, voted Labour, and obviously this was primarily because Churchill was on the other side. They voted against Churchill as a symbol of reactionary imperialism and because they wanted to go home, but obviously the Labour Party will not fulfil their wishes. It consistently announced its full support for the Japanese War, win or lose the Election, and in fact it was just Hobson's Choice. Their votes did not enable them to decide what they themselves wanted to do. Democracy means choosing people to rule you. Doing as you want to do yourself (without interfering with anyone else!) is not democracy, but anarchy.

The only way in which imperialist adventures of this nature will be ended is by fraternization between peoples when this is possible; by refusing to obey the dictates of discipline and instead following natural inclinations. The Canadian soldiers won a major victory in preventing the Government from sending conscripts to the East. It may well be that in future generations when Vimy Ridge is a forgotten memory of a barbaric past, Canadian soldiers of our generation will be remembered for the solidarity aroused by the "zombies" in their struggle for elemental human rights, and, whether they were conscious of it or not, laying the foundations of internationalism.

If their lead were followed universally, the Japanese capitalists, still cut off from their foreign backers but without a war to bolster up their régime, would speedily fall a victim to the workers and peasants of Japan and its Empire, who have in past struggles shown their will to resist under the harshest tyranny.

JOHN BAYA.



# DIRECT ACTION for HOUSES

A little while ago *War Commentary* reported the arrest of 7 families who had settled in an empty 20-room mansion and a cottage, at Blantyre. However the case ended, it was, as this paper pointed out, "an indication of the kind of incident which is likely to become frequent during the aggravated housing shortage after the war." And now we read even in the reactionary dailies, reports of the activities in Brighton of the "Ex-servicemen's Secret Committee", whose "Vigilantes" so far number over 400 members. Working at night, they break into unoccupied houses and instal the homeless families of serving men, with their belongings and household goods. At their open-air meeting on Sunday, 9th July, the movement's Secretary described how they had received inquiries from London, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Liverpool and other parts of Britain, and added: "I have told them, 'If you see a house, take it and let the law do its damndest'. We have started a movement which we hope and pray will spread over the length and breadth of the land." Delegates of the Brighton movement have now visited London to attend a secret conference with the object of developing a similar organisation there.

The Brighton ex-servicemen evidently do not intend to be fooled again by the 'Homes for Heroes' patter of the politicians. They know that houses will only be provided as the result of their own militant action, and not through petitions, recommendations or ballot-paper crosses.

## Historic Housing Struggles

We often hear of the housing achievements of the Vienna Municipality in the 1920's, but we are never told the story of the determined action of the workers themselves which forced the authorities to provide houses. After the 1st World War, Austria was suffering the results of military defeat, blockade, famine and inflation, but her most desperate problem was overcrowding. In March 1921, 200,000 people silently demonstrated outside the Rathaus in Vienna carrying banners with the words "Give us Land, Wood and Stone, and we will make Bread!" But the Viennese workers knew that a demonstration by itself would accomplish nothing. The returning wounded soldiers didn't wait for houses to be built for them—they demanded that the government should hand over to them part of the Ex-emperor's Hunting Park. The government refused time after time to consider their request, so the ex-soldiers took a cartload of picks and shovels to the Lainzer Tiergarten and "dug themselves in". They

went on to build foundations, till the government was forced to recognise their *fait-accompli* and the "Kriegsinvaliden" settlement was begun. The workers of Hirschstetten appropriated bricks from an old fortress, and again in the industrial quarter beyond the Danube the transport workers and others coerced the authorities into action by first taking the initiative themselves. They began work on the houses, and the Government afterwards legalised the affair by leasing the land. In the same way the postal workers and many more, by their own action forced the government to initiate the Vienna Municipal Housing and Town Planning Scheme.

An English instance of working class expropriation during the same period is given in George Woodcock's *Homes or Hovels* (F.P. 6d.):

"One example was that of a camp of huts which had been built in Durham during the 1914-1918 war to accommodate Belgian refugees. There were about 650 concrete huts, with drainage, water, electricity, roads, a school and a hospital. The whole place was surrounded by heavy park railings with locked gates. At the end of the war the refugees returned home, the camp was deserted and locked up. Meanwhile, the housing shortage on Tyneside had become acute, and one night the gates of the camp were broken down and a number of working-class families established themselves in the huts. The number soon increased, and before the authorities awoke sufficiently to take action a large settlement was already in being. The government, realising that some considerable measure of force would be necessary to eject the new dwellers, gave in and accepted the situation."

Another more publicised instance was the "Blitz Hotel" incident of a few years ago, in Glasgow, where families of 'squatters' in a war-damaged building refused to leave until alternative accommodation had been provided for them.

## Housing and Ill-Health

Sir John Orr, in a recent speech showed that many social evils like high infantile mortality rate, high general death rate, crime rate, juvenile delinquency, tuberculosis, etc., can be directly attributed to malnutrition and bad housing. We don't need to be reminded of how food was systematically destroyed, to keep prices up, while millions went hungry, but it is not widely realised that in the same way, the housing shortage is not a question of productivity—the land, materials and workers exist—but an economic question. A society based on profits and dividends will not provide homes at rents which working class folk can afford, *because it wouldn't pay*.

"Though more than one-third of all houses in England and Wales were built since 1918, more than three-quarters of all houses of low value in 1938 had been erected before 1914,

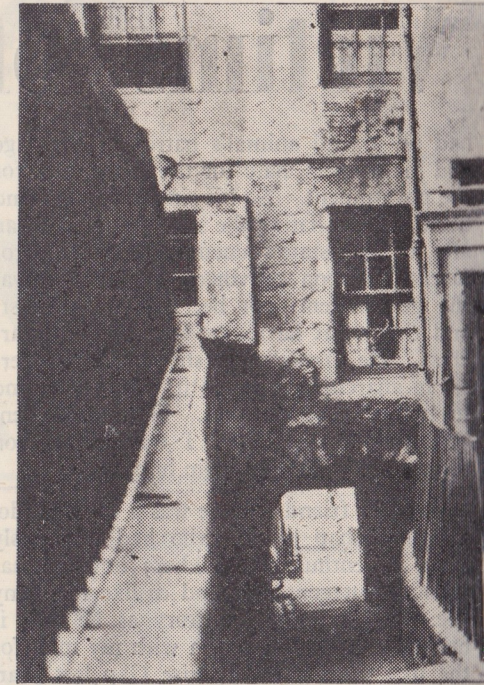
become new slum areas and rents are lower through deterioration and sub-division. But while the workers should not be deluded by the idea that they can get adequate, healthy, and pleasant homes without the destruction of the capitalist system, they should study the day-to-day possibilities of action for the lowering of rents and the prevention of rent increases.

## The Great Rent Strikes

Remember the Glasgow Rent Strikes of the 1st World War period. All over the city, when rent increases were made the housewives banded together street by street, refusing to pay, and forming the Womens' Housing Council. They spied on the movements of bailiffs and rent-collectors, barricaded their homes, put the furniture of evicted people back into the houses as soon as it was pitched out, and even had actual fights with the factors. The men came out from the big shipyards and works, and the government, finding that their promises of enquiries and legislation did not satisfy the workers, or prevent more men from stopping work, were forced to pass the First Rent Restrictions Act, while the landlords had to withdraw the increases. As one of the workers' delegates said, "The Country can't do without the 8,000 workers, but the country can do without the factors." The Glasgow Rent Strike was important as a tendency towards the social and political strike, one of the most potent of our eventual weapons against our rulers. The Glasgow workers knew that they could not rely for support on the official Trade Union and Labour leaders, (I expect they remembered the words of Robert Smillie, M.P., years before, when he said to a woman who was trying to prevent the sheriff's officer from turning her out, "I'd advise you to get out of the way and let the man do his work. You can't do any good.") The workers' task, now, just as it was in 1915 is, as John Maclean said then, "to take the initiative into their own hands".

The second great Rent Strike Movement grew from London in the years just before the second World War. In 1938, 250 tenants at Quinn Square, Bethnal Green, started a strike to demand not only the repayment of money charged above the limits of the Rent Restrictions Act, but for a general reduction of rents in future. They succeeded and were followed by a strike of 131 tenants of Southern Grove, Mile End, who picketed, barricaded, and demonstrated to get repairs done and rents lowered. They too were successful and shortly afterwards workers living in three London areas, Holborn, Stepney, and Poplar, whose flats all belonged to the same landlord, struck:

"900 tenants secured a victory and signed an agreement which established a flat rate for every type of dwelling and provided for adequate repairs and redecorations to all flats to be started immediately and carried out



TENEMENT SLUMS

Wood Green, and many other places in and around London.

In the Municipal tenants' strike at Birmingham, 40,000 people fought for 19 weeks to prevent rent increases, and 15,000 of them got reductions amounting to £30,000 a year. The continued success of these Rent Strikes and their rapid spreading, frightened landlords everywhere into doing repairs, and some even offered to reduce rents, while the government at the beginning of the War passed the second Rent Restrictions Act, (although this has been widely ignored or evaded by landlords).

There has been much less of a struggle against the burden of rates, although, as Sir E. D. Simon says; quoting the case of a man trying to move out of a slum area into a new housing estate, and finding that besides having to pay say, 5/- more a week in rent, he has also an additional 4/- in rates: "Surely no other tax existing in this country even approaches in harshness and injustice this tax on a poor father of a large family, of 10% of his income for rates alone, levied just because he is making special sacrifices to bring up his children in good conditions". He points out that "a rich man living in a large house will often not pay as much as 1% of his income in rates". Certainly, few taxes are so designed as to make both the poor poorer and the rich, richer. Councillor A. B. Mackay, of Glasgow explains how our rating system benefits the landlords:

"The landlord class had unbridled control of legislation for centuries and they abused

NEW FREEDOM PRESS  
PUBLICATIONS

The French Cook's Syndicate



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"Though more than one-third of all houses in England and Wales were built since 1918, more than three-quarters of all houses of low value in 1938 had been erected before 1914, and they provided the houses of perhaps eight in every ten working-class families."

*The Times*, 3/2/45.

It should also be pointed out that, of these houses one-third were actually built before 1861, and that these figures do not include Scotland whose housing standards are lower still. This is the lesson of the past, and it will be repeated in the future, unless the workers act. If the lavish promises of the politicians are fulfilled, they will only succeed in housing the highest-paid workers, and the lower middle class, while the ordinary working class family can only hope for the older and obsolete houses from which the more fortunate people have moved, when they

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*Reynolds News*, 16/4/1939.

The Stepney tenants conducted the Langdale Mansions strike and the 'Great Brady Street Battle', as well as many others. The 340 Brady Street tenants barricaded their homes and fought the landlords for 21 weeks, after which they won big reductions; the return of evicted tenants; and an agreement by the landlord to carry out the necessary repairs to the extent of £2,500 for the first year, and £1,500 for each year afterwards. Rent strikes also occurred at Amersham, Balham, Bellingham, Dagenham, Hammersmith, Hampstead, Hendon, Holborn, Maldon, Woolwich,

reductions amounting to £30,000 a year. The continued success of these Rent Strikes and their rapid spreading, frightened landlords everywhere into doing repairs, and some even offered to reduce rents, while the government at the beginning of the War passed the second Rent Restrictions Act, (although this has been widely ignored or evaded by landlords).

There has been much less of a struggle against the burden of rates, although, as Sir E. D. Simon says; quoting the case of a man trying to move out of a slum area into a new housing estate, and finding that besides having to pay, 5/- more a week in rent, he has also an additional 4/- in rates: "Surely no other tax existing in this country even approaches in harshness and injustice this tax on a poor father of a large family, of 10% of his income for rates alone, levied just because he is making special sacrifices to bring up his children in good conditions". He points out that "a rich man living in a large house will often not pay as much as 1% of his income in rates". Certainly, few taxes are so designed as to make both the poor poorer and the rich, richer. Councillor A. B. Mackay, of Glasgow explains how our rating system benefits the landlords:

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## NEW FREEDOM PRESS PUBLICATIONS

### The French Cook's Syndicate

by W. McCartney. 3d.

### Collectives in Spain

by Gaston Leval. 1d.

## RECENT PUBLICATIONS

### Italy After Mussolini

by John Hewetson. 6d.

## PENNY PAMPHLETS

### What is Anarchism?

by George Woodcock

Vote—What For? by E. Malatesta.

On Law, by William Godwin.

## USE GAS!

Gas, at least, was one of the excesses we were spared. And the threat of reprisal may well have saved us.

We are faced now with the task of beating Japan, and of doing so in the shortest possible time. Is this not the moment, then, to consider the usefulness of every possible weapon that is available?

There were military rather than humanitarian reasons which precluded the use of gas in the war in Europe. Reprisal would have come upon whichever side initiated gas warfare.

Leaving aside all sentiment, however, the case of Japan is different.

Allied air superiority is such that Japan, even if she had the chemical resources, could make no effective answer in kind to the introduction of gas warfare.

The subject is an unsavoury one, but war against the Japanese is an outstandingly unsavoury commitment. We have learned that with accumulating bitterness.

Editorial, *Sunday Dispatch*, 22/7/45.

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Suffolk police believe the killer of Daphne Bacon, a 14-year-old Leiston girl who was beaten to death in a rye field, is a sadist and still in the locality.

*News Chronicle*, 16/7/45.

Did the Suffolk police think the girl might have been a masochist and beaten herself to death?

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Internationals however, were marked down following the overnight weakness on Wall Street, where prices fell owing to talk of an earlier finish to the war in the Pacific than recently expected.

City Editor, *Evening News*, 18/7/45

# Through the Press

## REVELATION

"I am 75, and my experience teaches me that a man can go on working very hard for many years after he has reached the age of 67," said Lord Justice Scott in the Court of Appeal today, when the case of a miner who was said to be wholly incapacitated by reason of his physical conditions at the age of 67 was being considered. Lord Justice Mackinnon commented: "It is

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## HER MASTER'S VOICE

Soviet Union is giving Warsaw a gift of a new radio station which will be audible throughout the entire world, Moscow radio announced yesterday.

*News Chronicle*, 12/7/45.

Warsaw will be able to talk to the world, but the words will be put into her mouth by Moscow.

## BOUVERIE STREET MENTALITY

What was the significance of the cartoon by Giles in the day before yesterday's *Sunday Express*? It depicted a railway worker saying to his mates: "There was only one man who entered Parliament with good intentions—Guy Fawkes."

It may have been just a joke—but it is the kind of joke that would have made Hitler rub his hands in the days when he was leading up to the Reichstag fire. *News Chronicle*, 10/7/45.

Even the Stalinized Liberals of the *News Chronicle* ought to get a sense of humour, even if they haven't any sense otherwise. Giles's *Sunday Express* joke is taken from a joke current among workers for generations.

## LIBERATION—NOT YET

Strikes in France, Denmark, Holland and North Italy, involving gas workers, bank clerks, miners, teachers, postmen and others, were reported last night.

Shortest were token stoppages of 20 minutes and half an hour by Paris postmen, wanting a £24-a-month minimum salary and gas workers seeking overdue bonuses. Toulon bank clerks had a picket line.

As Rotterdam dockers went back to work 3,000 Dutch coalmine and gas workers downed tools.

Shipping workers still out in Denmark have rejected Government compromise proposals.

Milan strikers are parading with banners inscribed, "We are hungry," while Allied tanks and armed patrols kept guard.

*Daily Herald*, 6/7/45.

It's the fur of the War correspondent who writes such stuff that SHOULD fly.

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Lord Justice Mackinnon commented: "It is much easier to sit in the Court of Appeal than work in a mine."

*Star*, 16/7/45.

This chance remark of Lord Justice Mackinnon might with profit be pointed out to some of the smaller-fry in the legal profession—i.e., the local magistrates who fine and imprison miners for "absenteeism", etc., and add insulting remarks in the bargain.

## A NEW POLICE STATE

Major Minor K. Wilson, who has returned to the United States to select staff for "de-Nazification" work, has asked for finger-print experts for duty in Germany, where the American occupation authorities are to take the finger-prints of about 3,000,000 people.

*Manchester Guardian*, 17/7/45.

## POTSDAM TROUBLES

Delegates to the Potsdam Conference will be able to shop at one of the most fully-stocked stores of this war-time world. The list of goods on sale includes:

Cameras, film, Swiss self-winding wrist-watches, alarm clocks, fountain-pens, women's handbags from Paris, men's leather travelling kits, perfumes, French lipsticks, French lipsticks in perky umbrella-shaped pink containers and German lace.

*News Chronicle*, 18/7/45.

We can imagine how those supermen who are deciding the fate of the world will ponder over the choice between a Swiss self-winding wrist watch and an umbrella-shaped lipstick.

## JOIN THE POLICE AND BECOME A CRIMINAL

The Los Angeles police force to-day was described as a "crime school" by one of two officers sentenced to one to 15 years in San Quentin Prison for burglary.

"I would never have done this if I had not been on the police force," Howard C. Wade, 33, told Judge Charles Fricke. "I suppose I got the habit when other officers who were robbing drunks would take their money and split it with me."

*The Stars and Stripes*, 16/7/45.

have been a mascot and beaten herself to death?

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Moslem casualties were 1,500 (according to local French civilian estimates) or 500 (according to local French military estimates).

Forty-four small Moslem villages, with a total population of less than 3,000, were bombed.

Following the risings, 2,400 Moslems were arrested, but 517 had been released by July 15. So far 44 sentences of death had been passed.

*News Chronicle*, 19/7/45.

## CHURCHILL PUTS UP WITH RUSSIAN POLICE

Stalin is seldom a guest. His visit to the British Embassy at Churchill's invitation broke all precedent. As a precaution, the N.K.V.D. sent a detachment of white-uniformed special guards, who took up positions at various points throughout the old mansion. When Churchill's Scotland Yard men, also acting as bodyguards, saw Stalin's men disposing themselves round the place, they were much disturbed.

The British police chief finally went up to Churchill and said, "Your honour, I don't like the look of this—these foreign troops on his Majesty's soil. It's highly irregular, sir."

Churchill nodded agreement. "I'm afraid we'll have to put up with it, though," he replied, "just this once."

Edgar Snow in *Sunday Dispatch*, 8/7/45.

## G.I. IRE

Would any Senator willingly arouse G.I. ire? Obviously not. Yet the *New York Times* last week headlined: SENATORS IN ITALY STIR ARMY ANGER.

The Senators were Montana's Burton K. Wheeler and New Jersey's Albert W. Hawkes, ex-industrialist and one time president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. In Rome, they had attended a forum with 250 soldiers at a Red Cross club. It was a stormy session.

First break came when an enlisted man asked Senator Hawkes why Italy is not getting more aid from the U.S. When Hawkes inquired, "How would you help Italy?", the G.I. retorted: "We are paying you to be a Senator to answer such questions!"

*Time* (U.S.A.), 18/6/45.

earlier than to the war in the Pacific than recently expected.

City Editor, *Evening News*, 18/7/45.

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*News Chronicle*, 21/7/45.

## INTERVIEW WITH STALIN

"I personally," I went on, "have seen, in so many things the Soviet Government has done for the common man, something that was very much in accord with my concept of Christian teaching and morality. I fear that there have often been grounds for the charge that those who say they believe in a God of justice and love act as if they did not believe it, while many who deny such a belief act as if they did."

Stalin and Molotov smiled slightly.

Very Rev. Hewlett Johnson,  
(Dean of Canterbury) in  
*News Chronicle*, 18/7/45.

You could hardly have blamed Stalin and Molotov if they'd burst out laughing at their naive stooge.

## LIES ABOUT TRUTH

During the Nazi terror in France, 'news-papers' bringing the people the real truth about the war were often only about half the size of this advertisement. Each copy circulated to scores of people, and to be found passing one on meant torture or death. They were printed on the thinnest tissue, so that in a sudden emergency they could be chewed up quickly and eaten, as indeed they frequently were, to avoid detection by the Gestapo.

If the Nazis had come to Britain, we too might have been sometimes forced to eat our newspapers—or starve for news. It is not a pleasant thought, but we should recall it when we sometimes do (grousing being one of the privileges of democracy), about our national Press.

Advertisement issued by the *Daily Express*.

The bright guy who wrote this advertisement measuring 4 in. x 4 in. seems to have not only romantic ideas about the ingenuity of the underground Press but a boundless faith in the capacity of the yellow Press to speak the truth.



# ACTION for HOUSES

ent on to build foundations, till the government was forced to recognise their *fait-accompli* and the "Kriegsinvaliden" settlement was begun. The workers of Hirschstetten appropriated bricks from an old fortress, and again in the industrial quarter beyond the Danube the transport workers and others coerced the authorities to action by first taking the initiative themselves. They began work on the houses, and the Government afterwards legalised the affair by leasing the land. In the same way the postal workers and many more, by their own action forced the government to initiate the Vienna Municipal Housing and Town Planning Scheme.

An English instance of working class expropriation during the same period is given in George Woodcock's *Homes orhovels* (F.P. 6d.):

"One example was that of a camp of huts which had been built in Durham during the 1914-1918 war to accommodate Belgian refugees. There were about 650 concrete huts, with drainage, water, electricity, roads, a school and a hospital. The whole place was surrounded by heavy park railings with locked gates. At the end of the war the refugees returned home, the camp was deserted and locked up. Meanwhile, the housing shortage on Tyneside had become acute, and one night the gates of the camp were broken down and a number of working-class families established themselves in the huts. The number soon increased, and before the authorities awoke sufficiently to take action a large settlement was already in being. The government, realising that some considerable measure of force would be necessary to eject the new dwellers, gave in and accepted the situation."

Another more publicised instance was the "Blitz Hotel" incident of a few years ago, in Glasgow, where families of 'squatters' in a war-damaged building refused to leave until alternative accommodation had been provided for them.

## Housing and Ill-Health

Sir John Orr, in a recent speech showed that many social evils like high infantile mortality rate, high general death rate, crime rate, juvenile delinquency, tuberculosis, etc., can be directly attributed to malnutrition and bad housing. We don't need to be reminded of how food was systematically destroyed, to keep prices up, while millions went hungry, but it is not widely realised that in the same way, the housing shortage is not a question of productivity—the land, materials and workers exist—but an economic question. A society based on profits and dividends will not provide homes at rents which working class folk can afford, because it wouldn't pay.

"Though more than one-third of all houses in England and Wales were built since 1918, more than three-quarters of all houses of low value in 1938 had been erected before 1914, and they provided the houses of perhaps eight

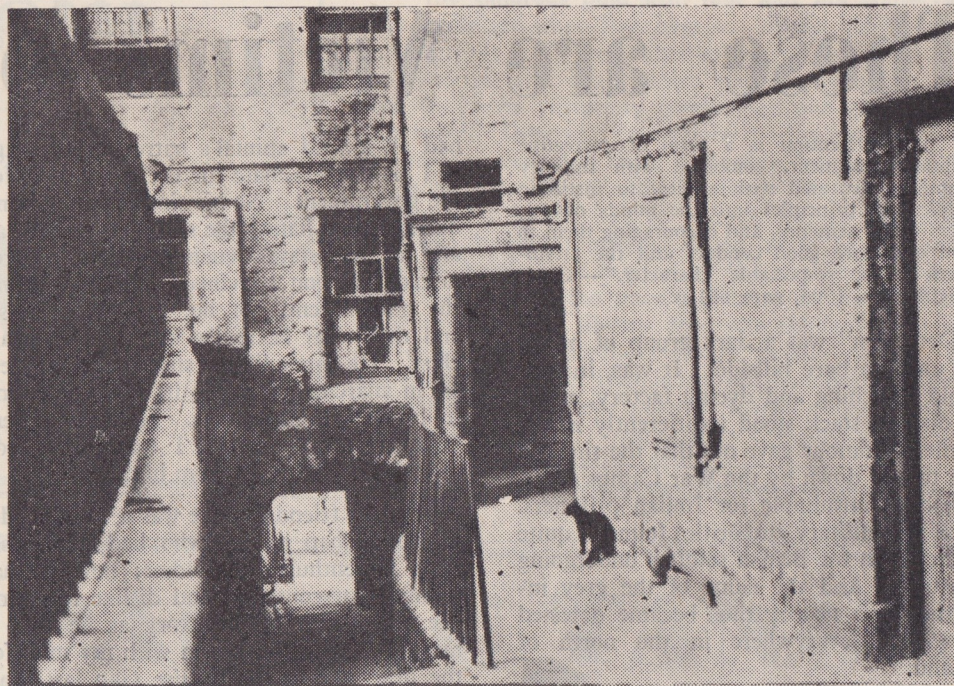
before new slum areas and rents are lower through deterioration and sub-division. But while the workers should not be deluded by the idea that they can get adequate, healthy, and pleasant homes without the destruction of the capitalist system, they should study the day-to-day possibilities of action for the lowering of rents and the prevention of rent increases.

## The Great Rent Strikes

Remember the Glasgow Rent Strikes of the 1st World War period. All over the city, when rent increases were made the housewives banded together street by street, refusing to pay, and forming the Womens' Housing Council. They spied on the movements of bailiffs and rent-collectors, barricaded their homes, put the furniture of evicted people back into the houses as soon as it was pitched out, and even had actual fights with the factors. The men came out from the big shipyards and works, and the government, finding that their promises of enquiries and legislation did not satisfy the workers, or prevent more men from stopping work, were forced to pass the First Rent Restrictions Act, while the landlords had to withdraw the increases. As one of the workers' delegates said, "The Country can't do without the 8,000 workers, but the country can do without the factors." The Glasgow Rent Strike was important as a tendency towards the social and political strike, one of the most potent of our eventual weapons against our rulers. The Glasgow workers knew that they could not rely for support on the official Trade Union and Labour leaders, (I expect they remembered the words of Robert Smillie, M.P., years before, when he said to a woman who was trying to prevent the sheriff's officer from turning her out, "I'd advise you to get out of the way and let the man do his work. You can't do any good."). The workers' task, now, just as it was in 1915 is, as John Maclean said then, "to take the initiative into their own hands".

The second great Rent Strike Movement grew from London in the years just before the second World War. In 1938, 250 tenants at Quinn Square, Bethnal Green, started a strike to demand not only the repayment of money charged above the limits of the Rent Restrictions Act, but for a general reduction of rents in future. They succeeded and were followed by a strike of 131 tenants of Southern Grove, Mile End, who picketed, barricaded, and demonstrated to get repairs done and rents lowered. They too were successful and shortly afterwards workers living in three London areas, Holborn, Stepney, and Poplar, whose flats all belonged to the same landlord, struck:

"900 tenants secured a victory and signed an agreement which established a flat rate for every type of dwelling and provided for adequate repairs and redecorations to all flats to be started immediately and carried out



## TENEMENT SLUMS IN EDINBURGH

Wood Green, and many other places in and around London.

In the Municipal tenants' strike at Birmingham, 40,000 people fought for 19 weeks to prevent rent increases, and 15,000 of them got reductions amounting to £30,000 a year. The continued success of these Rent Strikes and their rapid spreading, frightened landlords everywhere into doing repairs, and some even offered to reduce rents, while the government at the beginning of the War passed the second Rent Restrictions Act, (although this has been widely ignored or evaded by landlords).

There has been much less of a struggle against the burden of rates, although, as Sir E. D. Simon says; quoting the case of a man trying to move out of a slum area into a new housing estate, and finding that besides having to pay say, 5/- more a week in rent, he has also an additional 4/- in rates: "Surely no other tax existing in this country even approaches in harshness and injustice this tax on a poor father of a large family, of 10% of his income for rates alone, levied just because he is making special sacrifices to bring up his children in good conditions". He points out that "a rich man living in a large house will often not pay as much as 1% of his income in rates". Certainly, few taxes are so designed as to make both the poor poorer and the rich, richer. Councillor A. B. Mackay, of Glasgow explains how our rating system benefits the landlords:

"The landlord class had unbridled control of legislation for centuries and they abused their power, legislating in their own class

public body or a private person will pay up the inflated price which scarcity of land provides."

The middle-class ratepayers' associations show on which side of the fence they stand when they continually call for a reduction of rates made possible by cutting down those social services from which the working class benefits. They do not demand a proper rating of their friends the landlords.

A quite unique form of Rate Strike was that made by George Lansbury's Poplar Borough Council in the early 1920's, when they refused to levy the L.C.C.'s Poor Rate because it imposed an indefensible burden on the working class boroughs to the exclusion of the wealthy ones. Once Lansbury and his council had been jailed, it was found that because they wouldn't alter their view, they would have to stay in prison indefinitely. The only way in which the authorities could solve the absurd situation was to change the law! There have been sporadic Rates Strikes amongst the workers, but never to the extent of the Rent Strikes.

From the examples mentioned, we can see how effective direct action can be when applied to our housing problems. It works, it gets results. Already the Brighton Corporation has promised to requisition houses officially for its homeless people. But it wouldn't have even come "limping along behind" in this matter, but for the action of the Vigilantes. Our message to them should be:

Act on your own—no reliance on the politicians, especially those who try to cash in on



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"Though more than one-third of all houses in England and Wales were built since 1918, more than three-quarters of all houses of low value in 1938 had been erected before 1914, and they provided the houses of perhaps eight in every ten working-class families."

*The Times*, 3/2/45.

It should also be pointed out that, of these houses one-third were actually built before 1861, and that these figures do not include Scotland whose housing standards are lower still. This is the lesson of the past, and it will be repeated in the future, unless the workers act. If the lavish promises of the politicians are fulfilled, they will only succeed in housing the highest-paid workers, and the lower middle class, while the ordinary working class family can only hope for older and obsolete houses from which the more fortunate people have moved, when they

out, "I advise you to get out of the way and let the man do his work. You can't do any good." The workers' task, now, just as it was in 1915 is, as John Maclean said then, "to take the initiative into their own hands".

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*Reynolds News*, 16/4/1939.

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Stick together, and work on as big a scale as possible!

Don't give up, and don't give a damn for the authorities!

If the Vigilantes have these three prerequisites for successful action, INDEPENDENCE, SOLIDARITY, and DETERMINATION, we can be sure that their movement will "spread over the length and breadth of the land," and may have consequences and give opportunities which it would be criminal for the workers to ignore.

COLIN WARD.

## UNK!

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City Editor, *Evening News*, 18/7/45.

## TRUE CO-OPERATION

The larders and cellars of the Potsdam magic circle are well stocked on international lines: Turkeys, chickens, and coffee from America; vodka and caviare from Russia. From Great Britain, whisky, tea, and the roast beef of old England. Champagne and cognac from France; butter and eggs from Denmark; and fish from Norway.

*News of the World*, 15/7/45.

## BUT VIENNA STARVES

Suffering from typhus, weakened by hunger, and facing acute housing shortage, Vienna is almost reduced to living on the charity of the Russians.

The shortages of medical facilities, vitamins and food are hampering the Government's efforts to establish a minimum standard of health.

There is no assistance for the repair of transports, water and sewage pipes, or the most modest rebuilding programme.

*Evening Standard*, 18/7/45.

## SO DOES CHINA

Most of Kweichow is at the moment suffering from famine. One of the bad spots is Tating, a small hsien (administrative rural district) city at almost 8,000 feet above sea-level, with very little rich land in the vicinity. Corn is the staple diet of the people and coal-digging is the only local industry. The high population is

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*News Chronicle*, 21/7/45

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# Through the Press

## REVELATION

"I am 75, and my experience teaches me that a man can go on working very hard for many years after he has reached the age of 67," said Lord Justice Scott in the Court of Appeal to-day, when the case of a miner who was said to be wholly incapacitated by reason of his physical conditions at the age of 67 was being considered. Lord Justice Mackinnon commented: "It is much easier to sit in the Court of Appeal than work in a mine." *Star*, 16/7/45.

This chance remark of Lord Justice Mackinnon might with profit be pointed out to some of the smaller-fry in the legal profession—i.e., the local magistrates who fine and imprison miners for "absenteeism", etc., and add insulting remarks in the bargain.

## A NEW POLICE STATE

Major Minor K. Wilson, who has returned to the United States to select staff for "de-Nazification" work, has asked for finger-print experts for duty in Germany, where the American occupation authorities are to take the finger-prints of about 3,000,000 people.

*Manchester Guardian*, 17/7/45.

## POTSDAM TROUBLES

Delegates to the Potsdam Conference will be able to shop at one of the most fully-stocked stores of this war-time world. The list of goods on sale includes:

Cameras, film, Swiss self-winding wrist-watches, alarm clocks, fountain-pens, women's handbags from Paris, men's leather travelling kits, perfumes, French lipsticks, French lipsticks in a perky umbrella-shaped pink containers and German lace.

*News Chronicle*, 18/7/45.

We can imagine how those supermen who are deciding the fate of the world will ponder over the choice between a Swiss self-winding wrist watch and an umbrella-shaped lipstick.

## JOIN THE POLICE AND BECOME A CRIMINAL

The Los Angeles police force to-day was described as a "crime school" by one of two officers sentenced to one to 15 years in San Quentin prison for burglary.

"I would never have done this if I had not been on the police force," Howard C. Wade, 33, told Judge Charles Fricke. "I suppose I got the habit when other officers who were robbing drunks would take their money and split it with me."

*The Stars and Stripes*, 16/7/45.

## TERROR IN ALGERIA

Moslem Nationalist risings in Algeria last May resulted in disorder which has even now not been completely restored, M. Tixier, French Minister of the Interior, said to-day in the Consultative Assembly.

M. Tixier said French casualties totalled 88 killed (including 34 officials) and 150 wounded.

Moslem casualties were 1,500 (according to local French civilian estimates) or 500 (according to local French military estimates).

Forty-four small Moslem villages, with a total population of less than 3,000, were bombed.

Following the risings, 2,400 Moslems were arrested, but 517 had been released by July 15. So far 44 sentences of death had been passed.

*News Chronicle*, 19/7/45.

## CHURCHILL PUTS UP WITH RUSSIAN POLICE

Stalin is seldom a guest. His visit to the British Embassy at Churchill's invitation broke all precedent. As a precaution, the N.K.V.D. sent a detachment of white-uniformed special guards, who took up positions at various points throughout the old mansion. When Churchill's Scotland Yard men, also acting as bodyguards, saw Stalin's men disposing themselves round the place, they were much disturbed.

The British police chief finally went up to Churchill and said, "Your honour, I don't like the look of this—these foreign troops on his Majesty's soil. It's highly irregular, sir."

Churchill nodded agreement. "I'm afraid we'll have to put up with it, though," he replied, "just this once."

Edgar Snow in *Sunday Dispatch*, 8/7/45.

## G.I. IRE

Would any Senator willingly arouse G.I. ire? Obviously not. Yet the *New York Times* last week headlined: SENATORS IN ITALY STIR ARMY ANGER.

The Senators were Montana's Burton K. Wheeler and New Jersey's Albert W. Hawkes, ex-industrialist and one time president of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. In Rome, they had attended a forum with 250 soldiers at a Red Cross club. It was a stormy session.

First break came when an enlisted man asked Senator Hawkes why Italy is not getting more aid from the U.S. When Hawkes inquired, "How would you help Italy?", the G.I. retorted: "We are paying you to be a Senator to answer such questions!"

*Time (U.S.A.)*, 18/6/45.

## ANTI-FASCISTS BANNED

In accordance with regulations laid down in the Military Government Handbook, activities of the organisation known as Bavarian Freedom Action have been banned.

This is the second political organisation to be closed by the Bavarian Military Government since the end of the war with Germany.

The other was the budding anti-Fascist organisation at Dachau.

*News Chronicle*, 21/7/45

## INTERVIEW WITH STALIN

"I personally," I went on, "have seen, in so many things the Soviet Government has done for the common man, something that was very much in accord with my concept of Christian teaching and morality. I fear that there have often been grounds for the charge that those who say they believe in a God of justice and love act as if they did not believe it, while many who deny such a belief act as if they did."

Stalin and Molotov smiled slightly.

Very Rev. Hewlett Johnson,  
(Dean of Canterbury) in  
*News Chronicle*, 18/7/45.

You could hardly have blamed Stalin and Molotov if they'd burst out laughing at their naive stooge.

## LIES ABOUT TRUTH

During the Nazi terror in France, 'news-papers' bringing the people the real truth about the war were often only about half the size of this advertisement. Each copy circulated to scores of people, and to be found passing one on meant torture or death. They were printed on the thinnest tissue, so that in a sudden emergency they could be chewed up quickly and eaten, as indeed they frequently were, to avoid detection by the Gestapo.

If the Nazis had come to Britain, we too might have been sometimes forced to eat our newspapers—or starve for news. It is not a pleasant thought, but we should recall it when we grieve as we sometimes do (grieving being one of the privileges of democracy), about our modern Press.

Advertisement issued by the *Daily Express*.

The bright guy who wrote this advertisement measuring 4 in. x 4 in. seems to have not only romantic ideas about the ingenuity of the underground Press but a boundless faith in the capacity of the yellow Press to speak the truth.

## BUT VIENNA STARVES

Suffering from typhus, weakened by hunger, and facing acute housing shortage, Vienna is almost reduced to living on the charity of the Russians.

The shortages of medical facilities, vitamins and food are hampering the Government's efforts to establish a minimum standard of health.

There is no assistance for the repair of transports, water and sewage pipes, or the most modest rebuilding programme.

*Evening Standard*, 18/7/45.

## SO DOES CHINA

Most of Kweichow is at the moment suffering from famine. One of the bad spots is Tating, a small hsien (administrative rural district) city at almost 8,000 feet above sea-level, with very little rich land in the vicinity. Corn is the staple diet of the people and coal-digging is the only local industry. The hsien population is 300,000, of whom one-third are now suffering from hunger, another third will be in the same predicament if this year's crop is a poor one, and the last third is the eternal cadre who hold the wealth in grain and will never know a famine.

Unless something is done quickly to right the balance a large number of men, women, and children in Kweichow will die of starvation.—Yours, &c.

Letter from China to  
*Manchester Guardian*, 14/7/45.

## NOT SATISFIED

Friends of Lord Faversham have marked his increasing interest in City matters. They will not be surprised if he decides to take a more active part in business affairs.

At 38 he is one of the biggest landowners in the country, with estates totalling around 7,000 acres in North Yorkshire. In 1941 taxation led him to sell 12,000 acres, including four villages. He was Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture until 1939, when he resigned to devote himself to his estates.

*Evening Standard*, 13/7/45.

If it wasn't for the paper-rationing, the best thing to do would be to wrap the country up in clean white paper and give it to him.

## OUR BIGGEST THRILL

Ulster was thrilled when the news went round to-day that the Queen tapped one of the Ulster drums last night after drummers had banged out an Ulster welcome to the Royal Party at Hillsborough Castle.

*Evening Standard*, 18/7/45.

The Editors of *War Commentary* were so thrilled that they had to stop the *Through the Press* here feeling that any other cutting would be an anti-climax.



# These are Victims of War Too

"... Detention is a form of corrective military treatment, combined with military training, instituted with a view to instilling soldier-like principles into the minds of soldiers under sentence, and encouraging them to aim at future good conduct and the attainment of a respectable character."—King's Regulations, 1904, para 681 (c).

"Detention" was a dark group of buildings under a bare hillside. It was, in fact, an old bleaching and dyeing factory, and a tall disused stack stood indifferently in the middle. Rumour gave out that the site had been turned down by the War Camps Commission as unsuitable for Italian prisoners. Later, the military authorities found it quite good enough for British soldiers undergoing detention. And the name of the grey industrial town nearby thus became detested by soldiers everywhere in the north of England.

Surrounded by piles of barbed wire and standing in a tract of barren cindery ground, the place looked forbidding and desolate enough. Inside, we inhabited rooms, or, more properly, cages—huge areas enclosed on two sides by a cement wall and on the other sides by a double thickness of wire netting. We slept sixty or seventy to a cage, on two-tier beds, and the spaces between beds became as circumstances demanded, bathrooms, dining-rooms, meeting-places, lecture-halls, workshops and (most illegally) smoking-rooms. Barbed wire hung looped about the beams overhead, barring any possibilities of escape through the roof (which incidentally let in a lot of rain).

But the actual buildings are of little importance in themselves. What did we do all day? There was, of course, the usual spit-and-polish and preparation of kit lay-outs for inspection; the long parades, rifle drill, marching, P.T. and monotonous lectures on the most elementary use of weapons. All that could be expected. It was what we did *not* do, the long, empty, wasted hours locked up in our cages, with nothing to do and nothing to read, that we

had all a wild animal's hatred of the cage and his keepers, hate for the army, hate for the government. So his simple young mind decided that, hating the state, he must be an ally of the state's enemies—that is, pro-fascist. I soon convinced him that it was the government, not he, that was fascist; and that what he really was, was an anarchist. He immediately shewed great interest in anarchism, both in its philosophy and its industrial possibilities. He was a decent youngster at heart and I was sorry, soon after, to be separated from him.

Another friend I made was a Commando, a young chap of 20, who had previously been an enthusiastic soldier; now he has nothing but contempt and dislike for army life. I will relate his story as he told it himself: "I was in action with my mob for the first time at the Falaise Gap last year. We'd been at it continuously for four days with practically no sleep. The noise at times was just devastating. We hardly moved; just lay there, firing occasionally and seeing and hearing an endless stream of shells. Air attacks, too. Well, on the fifth day I felt pretty awful. I had a headache and there seemed to be a hammering inside my head too. I just had to get away, to find a bit of peace. I hoped to contact a field ambulance and get some rest there. But a couple of M.P.s picked me up and I was charged with "Desertion in the face of the Enemy". They took me back to my crowd *where I fought on for about a week*

until the 'gap' was cleared. Then they brought me back to this country, to a court-martial and all that. I got two years. Two years in this bloody dump, for a few hours!"

Several other prisoners, mainly infantry men and commandos, had had similar experiences. They all testified how humanly impossible it was to stand up, for any length of time, to the conditions of modern warfare. When they react naturally and humanly to such atrocious conditions, they are arrested, branded as cowards or traitors, and sent to vegetate in dilapidated factory-barracks for two years. That is the justice of democratic capitalism. How many hundreds of men are still confined to a soul-destroying existence for such 'crimes' only made possible by the terrorist methods adopted by one imperialist clique for the purpose of liquidating another? These men and thousands more in detention are the victims of war just as much as their comrades who are wounded or die "to the greater glory of capitalism." I think of them now, aimlessly walking up and down, their lives destitute of action or creative pleasure. And hundreds more join them every day. How long must this go on? In the name of these victims of war I ask workers and soldiers alike to protest against their criminal treatment and to demand their release.

G. I. D.

# NIGERIAN

The beginning of another great wave of colonial unrest can be seen in the large strike of government employees which is taking place present in the British West African colony Nigeria.

This strike has been called by the African Civil Servants Technical Workers' Union, a federation of some seventeen unions, which include all the railway and postal workers. The grievances of the workers are based on the fact that the cost of living has risen by over 200 per cent. in Nigeria since 1941, as a direct consequence of the war, and that, while adequate bonuses have been granted to European officials, the increases granted to native workers have been much too small to offset the increased cost of living. The workers made a very modest demand, that they should be granted a minimum daily wage of 2/6d. per day for unskilled workers. The government procrastinated for some months, and their final letter, dated 11th June, 1945, stated that "An increase in money wages will not secure any betterment of the conditions of living unless plentiful supplies of food and goods are available... agricultural production cannot be expected to show immediate improvement and existing conditions are likely to continue for some time."

This Jesuitical argument did not satisfy the Nigerian workers, and about a month ago 150,000 African workers came out on strike for the minimum wage of 2/6d. per day, binding themselves by their tribal oaths not to return to work until their demands had been granted.

Some of the Trade Union leaders pursued their usual course of trying to call off the strike.

## Correspondence

### SELF-CONDEMNED

Comrade,

In reply to my letter of 2nd of June, in which I strongly objected to the suggestion by a group of Glasgow comrades, that the Shop Stewards movement should be used for the purpose of organising the workers at the point of production, E.D.F. is mistaken if he considers that my criticism is based on superficial observation of the workshop struggle; even if it were, is there any sense in digging deep, when the things we search for are already lying on the surface.

I do not think that the workers on the Clydeside need be reminded that the Shop Stewards movement arose during the period of the last war.

## EDUCATE!

So often comrades write in and ask us for "particulars of your organisation", etc., that it may be useful to summarise what we have said in many individual letters, for the benefit of those others who may be interested.

The consistent Anarchist propaganda carried on, both through the medium of these columns and otherwise, has led to a large number of people wanting to get in touch with our movement and take part in the work. The Anarchist movement is not organised on party lines.

## ORGANIZE!

syndicalist movement in the workshops and factories. Propaganda at the point of production is very essential; it is the place where the workers are powerful; the place where they can be shown their strength and the potentialities of building a new society. With the building of groups, and with the resultant local influence, propaganda in the places of work becomes possible.

At the moment the pace is being set primarily by Glasgow and London. In Glasgow our



cage, on two-tier beds, and the spaces between beds became as circumstances demanded, bathrooms, dining-rooms, meeting-places, lecture-halls, workshops and (most illegally) smoking-rooms. Barbed wire hung looped about the beams overhead, barring any possibilities of escape through the roof (which incidentally let in a lot of rain).

But the actual buildings are of little importance in themselves. What did we do all day? There was, of course, the usual spit-and-polish and preparation of kit layouts for inspection; the long parades, rifle drill, marching, P.T. and monotonous lectures on the most elementary use of weapons. All that could be expected. It was what we did *not* do, the long, empty, wasted hours locked up in our cages, with nothing to do and nothing to read, that we detested. Most of us would willingly have drilled and marched away ten hours of the day, if only to pass time. But our actual hours of drills, lectures and fatigues amounted to only four a day. There were a few books, it is true (usually of the Mrs. Humphrey Ward type) which we were permitted to look at for an hour each night; but most of them had many pages missing: there was always a shortage of latrine paper.

Nevertheless, despite our restricted and unnatural way of life, we lived more harmoniously together than any soldiers under normal barrack conditions. Invisible but strong ties of sympathy bound us, and mutual hatred of the coarse "staffs" who dominated us. We never tired of listening to the stories of one another's misfortunes. We greeted newcomers cordially and watched, half-pleased, half-sorry, old comrades go off into the reality of the outside world. We ate the same drab unsweetened food, day in, day out; did the same monotonous drills; heard the same unchanging lectures; polished the same plates and bowls; sang the same martial hymns on Sundays ("Christians seek not yet repose" and the bit we all sniggered at—"The prisoner leaps to lose his chains,") and we wrote home, on alien army forms, the same unreal empty letters every Saturday.

Let me tell you something about my fellow prisoners. One of the first youngsters I spoke to, told me he was a fascist. He

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The consistent Anarchist propaganda carried on, both through the medium of these columns and otherwise, has led to a large number of people wanting to get in touch with our movement and take part in the work. The Anarchist movement is not organised on party lines. We have no paid organisers. It follows therefore that all the work of building up the movement must come from the *bottom upwards*. In other words, it rests upon the *individual*.

Basically all movements, even the authoritarian ones, depend for their existence on the enthusiasm and initiative of the individual volunteer. The paid organisers, Parliamentary candidates, would-be fuehrers, etc., depend for their existence very largely upon the unpaid local worker. We, having no subsidised executive, depend even more on the individual.

This is particularly so at present, as often when people write in from the provinces, we have no local group for them to contact, and propaganda has to start from the beginning; they have to form their own group. Experience has shown how groups can be created. It is by individuals slogging away at propaganda in all its forms—written, spoken and acted. Gradually a nucleus will be built up.

We urge our comrades to get down to this form of activity—pushing forward literature sales, holding meetings, lectures, etc., bringing the ideas of Anarchism to their workmates and general public. Not everyone can (or at least not everyone thinks he can) speak in public, but it is always possible to make individual contacts, push literature, etc. A note in *War Commentary* will usually bring around those contacts we already have locally to a meeting. As soon as public meetings are held, a certain response is assured almost anywhere, provided they are initiated by someone who plugs away at them until they finally achieve results.

### Building A Group

By these means a group can gradually be built up anywhere. Don't be dismayed if it takes some time. About ten years ago there was no Anarchist propaganda in this country; by consistent work over the past few years it has been built up into a sizeable proportion. The soil is ripe for Anarchist ideas; it is up to us to go ahead with them.

In some parts of the country Anarchist ideas are going forward quickly. In other parts they are being plugged away by individuals. We appeal to all comrades to come forward in

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syndicalist movement in the workshops and factories. Propaganda at the point of production is very essential; it is the place where the workers are powerful; the place where they can be shown their strength and the potentialities of building a new society. With the building of groups, and with the resultant local influence, propaganda in the places of work becomes possible.

At the moment the pace is being set primarily by Glasgow and London. In Glasgow our comrades have increased their influence by leaps and bounds, chiefly by continuous open-air and indoor meetings, and the uninterrupted spread of literature amongst the workers. From London the production of literature has gone out far and wide. In many other towns small groups and individuals are functioning with great persistence. Comrades in the Forces are surmounting very considerable difficulties. We make a special call upon all comrades to get out and plug the propaganda now—recent events have shown how political elements are scheming to remove from the sphere of activity some of our consistent workers. It is not enough to just replace those who are removed from the scene of activity—we want to go forward with greater momentum, greater determination. That is a job which cannot be undertaken by any "executive committee": it is up to all who have found themselves thinking on the same lines, reacting in the same way to events, finding the same basic solutions, to combine to make a movement built from the bottom up that will at its least be able to resist reaction and at its greatest be able to show the workers the road to a new society.

## WORKERS' BONUS STOPPED

Workers of the Electro-Platers, 47, Townsend Street, Glasgow, had their bonus stopped without any notification from the firm. This bonus was part of the conditions of employment when the workers were directed to the job by the Ministry of Labour.

The workers resented this as they realised it was a cut in wages. Sixteen employees out of about one hundred, after point blank refusal by the management to consider the case, walked off the job. This is practically a non-union shop as about seven workers only are members of the A.E.U.; these trade unionists, including a member of the C.P., as well as a non-union member of the Y.C.L., remained at work.

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I do not think that the workers on the Clyde need be reminded that the Shop Steward movement arose during the period of the last war.

The rank and file of that time can recall clearly the new hope which has arisen in the hearts and minds of the toilers throughout industrial Britain. Its opposition to the treachery of the trade union movement was the clarion call, and the workers responded with an energy and eagerness hitherto unparalleled in the history of workshop struggle.

"Why then did this movement—with millions of support assured—utterly fail to mobilise its mighty strength which was everywhere available?" The answer is clear and irrefutable. Without wasting your valuable space in accounting its brief and tragic history, it is sufficient to say that it went the way of all reaction, deserting the workers, and became the associate of the very movement which it set out to destroy.

This brief analysis is supported by evidence of such an overwhelming nature, that E.D.F. admits that "the Shop Steward movement shows signs of degeneracy within it" and that "many Shop Stewards are guilty of more atrocities against the working class than the commanders of the Belsen".

It would seem therefore that the paramount duty of all class-conscious workers is to bend the task of destroying this treacherous and contemptible movement and hasten it to the traitor's tomb, which has already been prepared for it.

In conclusion, I wonder if E.D.F. thinks that the workers can ever forget, or forgive, the despicable role played by these associations during this war. Can they erase from their minds the memory of the heavy fines imposed for the imprisonment of their comrades, and all the frenzied demands by this movement for the opening of a second front, where millions of workers were slaughtered in this imperialist struggle for power. This latter crime brands this movement for all time as having sunk deeper into the cesspool of reaction than any of its predecessors.

J. McD.

★  
THE PALESTINE  
COMMUNAL  
SETTLEMENT



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## Our Movement ABROAD

**FRANCE.** The I.W.M.A. Press Service states that comrades formerly belonging to its French section, the C.G.T.S.R. (revolutionary syndicalist organization), have organized a section inside the reformist C.G.T. and are editing a paper, *La Bataille Syndicaliste*, owning allegiance to the I.W.M.A. Their fraction has support amongst the Metal Workers syndicate in particular, as well as the Postal and Telegraphic workers, school-teachers, building workers, printers, etc.

On the first of May, the C.G.T. appealed to the workers to work, and give their salary to reconstruction purposes. The revolutionary syndicalist fraction asked the workers to protest against this, as a result of which the C.G.T. changed its mind, and held its meetings during working-hours.

In a manifesto, it declares itself: "For the complete independence of the C.G.T. from all political parties and against its intervention in the Elections. For the end of the wage system. For fraternization between all peoples. For peace. For real freedom. Against re-armament."

**SWEDEN.** The Swedish section of the I.W.M.A.—the S.A.C.—has published its report of activities during 1944. It has now 574 local organizations, and 21,902 members, publishing two daily papers (*Arbetaren* and *Noorlands-folket*) and an industrial paper (*Travaruindustriarbetaren*) and a review (*Syndikalismen*). It has a publishing house and its own printing press.

The S.A.C. is formed by division into 18 districts for purposes of propaganda and industrial organization. During the period in question, the local organizations took a great part in strikes, obtaining good results, in 41 cases.

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In some parts of the country Anarchist ideas are going forward quickly. In other parts they are being plugged away by individuals. We appeal to all comrades to come forward in the struggle. We can make Anarchist propaganda really effective by concerted action at this time. By undertaking the pushing of literature, holding meetings, etc., you can help to form a local group, that will soon become the centre of considerable activity if based on the right stuff.

### Industrial Activity

Some groups are already the centres of industrial activity; and the nucleus of an anarcho-

## JIM CROW AGAIN

The Jim Crow arrangements for the demobilisation of the American army are causing great discontent among Negro soldiers and are likely to arouse trouble for the American authorities before long. The points system on which American soldiers are demobilised is so arranged that soldiers get a considerable number of points for battle actions and for decorations. These points are given to soldiers in combat units regardless of whether they are actually fighting, and in the case of bomber outfits in the air forces men who are doing little better than cleaning latrines most of their time get the points for active battle service.

The Negroes, however, are not enrolled in combat units, with exceptions so few that they are negligible. The result of this will be that the vast majority of the Negroes will still be in the services long after white soldiers in combat units are released. If this obvious piece of racial discrimination is sustained, then the Negroes will have yet another grievance to bring up against the white ruling class when their day of reckoning arrives; it is only to be hoped that they will not let themselves extend their resentment to the ordinary white soldiers, who, in spite of the advantages they may gain from jim crow in the present case, are only the dupes of the bosses of their own colour, and whose cause, in the last resort, is the same as that of the exploited Negroes.

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The workers resented this as they realised it was a cut in wages. Sixteen employees out of about one hundred, after point blank refusal by the management to consider the case, walked off the job. This is practically a non-union shop as about seven workers only are members of the A.E.U.; these trade unionists, including a member of the C.P., as well as a non-union member of the Y.C.L. remained at work.

The sixteen proceeded to the N.S.O. and stated their case. They were told that nothing could be done about it. One worker stated that if through absenteeism he was referred to the N.S.O., action would have been taken against him, yet when the management of the Electro-Platers were now reported to the N.S.O. no action was taken, although these were the conditions agreed to by the Ministry of Labour.

The workers, after pressing their case further were referred to the Industrial Relations Officer, who at the moment is considering the case. Pending negotiations these sixteen workers intend to return to work on the Go Slow Basis.

### Action That Could Be Taken

As the workers have tried every road, they have reached the stage where they will have to rely on their own might, they see the example set by the C.P., Y.C.L. and Trade Unionists, and realise the reactionary role played by them. The workers here not tied by the trade union movement are ripe for a revolutionary syndicate run by the workers themselves, a workshop that is 100% trade union is 100% disorganised, as they are only organised to suit the Boss, through being tied to the State machine.

Actions that could be taken in such circumstances, are the complete solidarity of the workers in withdrawing their labour power, the go slow strike or a section strike which would be:—the stoppage of different sections of the work, such as, the polishers stopping while the rest are prepared to work, then polishers starting and the nickel platers stopping and so on, chrome platers, zinc platers, hard chrome platers, and wiring up sections, all stopping and starting alternately, bringing production to a standstill, yet sections of workers prepared to work. This touches the Boss where it hurts most, right in the money-bag!

There is also the "Sit Down Strike" or the "Working to Rule" which could be used. These are some examples. Well workers, it's up to you. Go To It.

JOHN DENNIS,  
SAM LAWSON.

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## THE PALESTINE COMMUNAL SETTLEMENTS

Dear Comrade,

I have not yet seen the communal settlements of Palestine mentioned as living examples of anarchist co-operation, which I think they are. Is this due to lack of information or disagreement with their ideals? I think the following facts, proved by my own experience at first hand, show that they are genuine workers' collectives.

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### ANARCHIST MEETINGS IN GLASGOW

Burnbank Group at Hamilton Cross,  
commencing 7 p.m. till dusk

Paisley Group at Jail Square,  
commencing 7 p.m. till dusk

Glasgow Group at Brunswick Street,  
commencing 3 p.m. till dusk

Edinburgh, the Mound,  
commencing 3 p.m. till dusk

Maxwell Street,  
commencing 7 p.m. till dusk



# Victims of War Too

had all a wild animal's hatred of the cage and his keepers, hate for the army, hate for the government. So his simple young mind decided that, hating the state, he must be an ally of the state's enemies—that is, pro-fascist. I soon convinced him that it was the government, not he, that was fascist; and that what he really was, was an anarchist. He immediately shewed great interest in anarchism, both in its philosophy and its industrial possibilities. He was a decent youngster at heart and I was sorry, soon after, to be separated from him.

Another friend I made was a Commando, a young chap of 20, who had previously been an enthusiastic soldier; now he has nothing but contempt and dislike for army life. I will relate his story as he told it himself: "I was in action with my mob for the first time at the Falaise Gap last year. We'd been at it continuously for four days with practically no sleep. The noise at times was just devastating. We hardly moved; just lay there, firing occasionally and seeing and hearing an endless stream of shells. Air attacks, too. Well, on the fifth day I felt pretty awful. I had a headache and there seemed to be a hammering inside my head too. I just had to get away, to find a bit of peace. I hoped to contact a field ambulance and get some rest there. But a couple of M.P.s picked me up and I was charged with "Desertion in the face of the Enemy". They took me back to my crowd where I fought on for about a week

until the 'gap' was cleared. Then they brought me back to this country, to a court-martial and all that. I got two years. Two years in this bloody dump, for a few hours!"

Several other prisoners, mainly infantry men and commandos, had had similar experiences. They all testified how humanly impossible it was to stand up, for any length of time, to the conditions of modern warfare. When they react naturally and humanly to such atrocious conditions, they are arrested, branded as cowards or traitors, and sent to vegetate in dilapidated factory-barracks for two years. That is the justice of democratic capitalism. How many hundreds of men are still confined to a soul-destroying existence for such 'crimes' only made possible by the terrorist methods adopted by one imperialist clique for the purpose of liquidating another? These men and thousands more in detention are the victims of war just as much as their comrades who are wounded or die "to the greater glory of capitalism." I think of them now, aimlessly walking up and down, their lives destitute of action or creative pleasure. And hundreds more join them every day. How long must this go on? In the name of these victims of war I ask workers and soldiers alike to protest against their criminal treatment and to demand their release.

G. I. D.

## EDUCATE! ORGANIZE!

So often comrades write in and ask us for "particulars of your organisation", etc., that it may be useful to summarise what we have said in many individual letters, for the benefit of those others who may be interested.

The consistent Anarchist propaganda carried on, both through the medium of these columns and otherwise, has led to a large number of people wanting to get in touch with our movement and take part in the work. The Anarchist movement is not organised on party lines. We have no paid organisers. It follows that

syndicalist movement in the workshops and factories. Propaganda at the point of production is very essential; it is the place where the workers are powerful; the place where they can be shown their strength and the potentialities of building a new society. With the building of groups, and with the resultant local influence, propaganda in the places of work becomes possible.

At the moment the pace is being set primarily by Glasgow and London. In Glasgow our comrades have increased their influence

# NIGERIAN GENERAL STRIKE

The beginning of another great wave of colonial unrest can be seen in the large strike of government employees which is taking place at present in the British West African colony of Nigeria.

This strike has been called by the African Civil Servants Technical Workers' Union, a federation of some seventeen unions, which include all the railway and postal workers. The grievances of the workers are based on the fact that the cost of living has risen by over 200 per cent. in Nigeria since 1941, as a direct consequence of the war, and that, while adequate bonuses have been granted to European officials, the increases granted to native workers have been much too small to offset the increased cost of living. The workers made a very modest demand, that they should be granted a minimum daily wage of 2/6d. per day for unskilled workers. The government procrastinated for some months, and their final letter, dated the 11th June, 1945, stated that "An increase in money wages will not secure any betterment in the conditions of living unless plentiful supplies of food and goods are available . . . agricultural production cannot be expected to show immediate improvement and existing conditions are likely to continue for some time."

This Jesuitical argument did not satisfy the Nigerian workers, and about a month ago 150,000 African workers came out on strike for the minimum wage of 2/6d. per day, binding themselves by their tribal oaths not to return to work until their demands had been granted.

Some of the Trade Union leaders pursued their usual course of trying to call off the strike.

Among them was T. A. Bankole, president of the Nigerian T.U.C. These leaders were immediately repudiated by the workers and expelled from their positions. Bankole was replaced by A. O. Imoudu, a railway worker who has just returned from four years' detention under the local defence regulations.

The Governor, Sir Arthur Richards, who gained a certain notoriety among coloured workers for his ruthless suppression of the labour riots in Jamaica before the war, immediately adopted harsh tactics. He threatened to withhold all wages due to the strikers and to cancel pensions and gratuities. He arrested four of the strike leaders and charged them with participating in an illegal strike. He has even gone so far as to arrest ten others of the strike leaders on a frame-up charge of sabotage.

The Defence Regulations which were withdrawn in May have been re-imposed, and a press censorship has been established. Already, under these powers, two of the leading Nigerian dailies, the *West African Pilot* and the *Daily Comet* have been suppressed for criticising the union leaders who wished to compromise with the government.

The latest news of the strike is that it is spreading steadily, and that many workers in private employment for European companies have come out in sympathy.

## Correspondence

### SELF-CONDEMNED

Comrade,

In reply to my letter of 2nd of June, in which I strongly objected to the suggestion by a group of Glasgow comrades, that the Shop Steward movement should be used for the purpose of organising the workers at the point of production, E.D.F. is mistaken if he considers that my criticism is based on superficial observation of the workshop struggle; even if it were, is there any sense in digging deep, when the things I search for are already lying on the surface.

I do not think that the workers on the Clyde need be reminded that the Shop Steward movement arose during the period of the last war.

set up by settlers in Palestine to purchase land for more settlers. The loan is repaid as the *kibbutz* builds itself up.

Buildings are provided by the settlers themselves—until they can afford stone buildings they live in whatever makeshift huts they are able to put up out of unwanted wood and canvas.

They live by farming, taking advantage of the research stations set up by old established *kibbutz*, detailed information as to crops, and the relative possibilities of dairy and fruit farming all being supplied. The time when the settlement learnt only by experience is over, though much still is only found out by trial and error as new areas are continually being opened up.



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Basically all movements, even the authoritarian ones, depend for their existence on the enthusiasm and initiative of the individual volunteer. The paid organisers, Parliamentary candidates, would-be *fuehrers*, etc., depend for their existence very largely upon the unpaid local worker. We, having no subsidised executive, depend even more on the individual.

This is particularly so at present, as often when people write in from the provinces, we have no local group for them to contact, and propaganda has to start from the beginning; they have to form their own group. Experience has shown how groups can be created. It is by individuals slogging away at propaganda in all its forms—written, spoken and acted. Gradually a nucleus will be built up.

We urge our comrades to get down to this form of activity—pushing forward literature sales, holding meetings, lectures, etc., bringing the ideas of Anarchism to their workmates and general public. Not everyone can (or at least not everyone thinks he can) speak in public, but it is always possible to make individual contacts, push literature, etc. A note in *War Commentary* will usually bring around those contacts we already have locally to a meeting. As soon as public meetings are held, a certain response is assured almost anywhere, provided they are initiated by someone who plugs away at them until they finally achieve results.

### Building A Group

By these means a group can gradually be built up anywhere. Don't be dismayed if it takes some time. About ten years ago there was no Anarchist propaganda in this country; by consistent work over the past few years it has been built up into a sizeable proportion. The soil is ripe for Anarchist ideas; it is up to us to go ahead with them.

In some parts of the country Anarchist ideas are going forward quickly. In other parts they are being plugged away by individuals. We appeal to all comrades to come forward in the struggle. We can make Anarchist propa-

syndicalist movement in the workshops and factories. Propaganda at the point of production is very essential; it is the place where the workers are powerful; the place where they can be shown their strength and the potentialities of building a new society. With the building of groups, and with the resultant local influence, propaganda in the places of work becomes possible.

At the moment the pace is being set primarily by Glasgow and London. In Glasgow our comrades have increased their influence by leaps and bounds, chiefly by continuous open-air and indoor meetings, and the uninterrupted spread of literature amongst the workers. From London the production of literature has gone out far and wide. In many other towns small groups and individuals are functioning with great persistence. Comrades in the Forces are surmounting very considerable difficulties. We make a special call upon all comrades to get out and plug the propaganda now—recent events have shown how political elements are scheming to remove from the sphere of activity some of our consistent workers. It is not enough to just replace those who are removed from the scene of activity—we want to go forward with greater momentum, greater determination. That is a job which cannot be undertaken by any "executive committee": it is up to all who have found themselves thinking on the same lines, reacting in the same way to events, finding the same basic solutions, to combine to make a movement built from the bottom up that will at its least be able to resist reaction and at its greatest be able to show the workers the road to a new society.

## WORKERS' BONUS STOPPED

Workers of the Electro-Platers, 47, Townsend Street, Glasgow, had their bonus stopped without any notification from the firm. This bonus was part of the conditions of employment when the workers were directed to the job by the Ministry of Labour.

The workers resented this as they realised it was a cut in wages. Sixteen employees out of about one hundred, after point blank refusal by the management to consider the case, walked off the job. This is practically a non-union shop as about seven workers only are members of the A.E.U.; these trade unionists, including a member of the C.P., as well as a non-union member of the Y.C.L. remained at work.

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I do not think that the workers on the Clyde need be reminded that the Shop Steward movement arose during the period of the last war.

The rank and file of that time can recollect clearly the new hope which has arisen in the hearts and minds of the toilers throughout industrial Britain. Its opposition to the treachery of the trade union movement was the clarion call, and the workers responded with an energy and eagerness hitherto unparalleled in the history of workshop struggle.

"Why then did this movement—with mass support assured—utterly fail to mobilise this mighty strength which was everywhere available?" The answer is clear and irrefutable. Without wasting your valuable space in accounting its brief and tragic history, it is sufficient to say that it went the way of all reaction, deserted the workers, and became the associate of that very movement which it set out to destroy.

This brief analysis is supported by evidence of such an overwhelming nature, that E.D.F. admits that "the Shop Steward movement has signs of degeneracy within it" and that "many Shop Stewards are guilty of more atrocities against the working class than the commander of Belsen".

It would seem therefore that the paramount duty of all class-conscious workers is to bend to the task of destroying this treacherous and contemptible movement and hasten it to the traitor's tomb, which has already been prepared for it.

In conclusion, I wonder if E.D.F. thinks that the workers can ever forget, or forgive, the despicable role played by these associations during this war. Can they erase from their minds the memory of the heavy fines imposed, the imprisonment of their comrades, and above all the frenzied demands by this movement for the opening of a second front, where millions of workers were slaughtered in this imperialist struggle for power. This latter crime brands this movement for all time as having sunk deeper into the cesspool of reaction than any of its predecessors.

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There are no officials, as such, in a *kibbutz*. They vary in constitution, but most appoint a secretary, a *mukhtar* or president (he has no power and is only useful for dealing with outside bodies, e.g. the British government, who are unable to comprehend a group of people who have no leader they obey and discuss every dealing with the outside world in open meeting!). Committees whose special function it is to arrange entertainment, supervise education of the children, and supervise the library are also elected. All these people do their special duties at night—no excuse except ill-health is accepted for not working on the land in the daytime, secretary, *mukhtar*, everyone.

Work is allocated the previous night by another elected committee, but often the allocation is decided more openly, as in one or two *kibbutz* I visited, when a dozen or more of the members assisted the committee every night.

Buying and selling are done through co-operative organisations—agricultural needs and surpluses are dealt with through *Hamashbir Hamerkazi* (Co-operative Wholesale Society), another organisation founded by the earlier settlers to deal with the outside world. It, again, is dependent solely on the support of the *kibbutzim*, a representative from each settlement going to the meetings at which its policy is decided on.

Produce is marketed locally, or through *Truva*, (another *kibbutz* co-operative, founded to market the produce of settlements in all the large towns. Its shops sell produce which has a name for value and quality throughout Palestine.)

There are three types of *kibbutz*—two are of the idea that a *kibbutz* must be small and limit themselves to a hundred or so members, the third admits anyone, Jew or gentile, who wishes to lead that kind of life. The latter are all the older established settlements such as Degania and Kinnereth. The difference between the two smaller types is that one is non-political—the other supports a left-wing political party in common with the larger type of *kibbutz*, though the latter supports a different party. The object of supporting a political party is to help immi-



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In some parts of the country Anarchist ideas are going forward quickly. In other parts they are being plugged away by individuals. We appeal to all comrades to come forward in the struggle. We can make Anarchist propaganda really effective by concerted action at this time. By undertaking the pushing of literature, holding meetings, etc., you can help to form a local group, that will soon become the centre of considerable activity if based on the right stuff.

## Industrial Activity

Some groups are already the centres of industrial activity; and the nucleus of an anarcho-

## JIM CROW AGAIN

The Jim Crow arrangements for the demobilisation of the American army are causing great discontent among Negro soldiers and are likely to arouse trouble for the American authorities before long. The points system on which American soldiers are demobilised is so arranged that soldiers get a considerable number of points for battle actions and for decorations. These points are given to soldiers in combat units regardless of whether they are actually fighting, and in the case of bomber outfits in the air forces men who are doing little better than cleaning latrines most of their time get the points for active battle service.

The Negroes, however, are not enrolled in combat units, with exceptions so few that they are negligible. The result of this will be that in the vast majority of the Negroes will still be in the services long after white soldiers in combat units are released. If this obvious piece of racial discrimination is sustained, then the Negroes will have yet another grievance to bring up against the white ruling class when their day of reckoning arrives; it is only to be hoped that they will not let themselves extend their resentment to the ordinary white soldiers, who, in spite of the advantages they may gain from jim crow in the present case, are only the dupes of the bosses of their own colour, and whose cause, in the last resort, is the same as that of the exploited Negroes.

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The sixteen proceeded to the N.S.O. and stated their case. They were told that nothing could be done about it. One worker stated that if through absenteeism he was referred to the N.S.O., action would have been taken against him, yet when the management of the Electro-Platers were now reported to the N.S.O. no action was taken, although these were the conditions agreed to by the Ministry of Labour.

The workers, after pressing their case further were referred to the Industrial Relations Officer, who at the moment is considering the case. Pending negotiations these sixteen workers intend to return to work on the Go Slow Basis.

## Action That Could Be Taken

As the workers have tried every road, they have reached the stage where they will have to rely on their own might, they see the example set by the C.P., Y.C.L. and Trade Unionists, and realise the reactionary role played by them. The workers here not tied by the trade union movement are ripe for a revolutionary syndicate run by the workers themselves, a workshop that is 100% trade union is 100% disorganised, as they are only organised to suit the Boss, through being tied to the State machine.

Actions that could be taken in such circumstances, are the complete solidarity of the workers in withdrawing their labour power, the go slow strike or a section strike which would be:— the stoppage of different sections of the work, such as, the polishers stopping while the rest are prepared to work, then polishers starting and the nickel platers stopping and so on, chrome platers, zinc platers, hard chrome platers, and wiring up sections, all stopping and starting alternately, bringing production to a standstill, yet sections of workers prepared to work. This touches the Boss where it hurts most, right in the money-bag!

There is also the "Sit Down Strike" or the "Working to Rule" which could be used. These are some examples. Well workers, it's up to you. Go To It.

JOHN DENNIS,  
SAM LAWSON.

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In conclusion, I wonder if E.D.F. thinks that the workers can ever forget, or forgive, the despicable role played by these associations during this war. Can they erase from their minds the memory of the heavy fines imposed, the imprisonment of their comrades, and above all the frenzied demands by this movement for the opening of a second front, where millions of workers were slaughtered in this imperialist struggle for power. This latter crime brands this movement for all time as having sunk deeper into the cesspool of reaction than any of its predecessors.

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No *kibbutz* I visited, or any member I spoke with (most of them speak English), wanted to establish Palestine for the Jews only. "We have suffered too much to wish to exclude anyone from this land as we were hunted from the countries of our birth", one of them said to me. Their main idea is to see all men living with one another in the same relations of equality and freedom as they live in a *kibbutz*.

Information on the communal settlements is mainly obtained from pamphlets published by the Jewish Agency, and there is a book by Pearlman called "Collective Adventure", which deals with the early stages of settlement in the troubled period between 1930 and 1936.

Everyone in Palestine, even the British Government, admits that the *kibbutz* has come to stay. Moshav Ovdim, where land is owned individually and not collectively, and which are otherwise the same as *kibbutz*, also are growing in numbers.

Yours sincerely,

J. F. H.

## WAR COMMENTARY

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